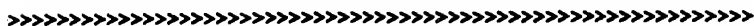


THE POEMS AND PLAYS  
OF  
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



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*in the United States of America*



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## INTRODUCTION

The latter half of the nineteenth century in England saw the flowering to maturity of two of the great poetic figures of English literature—Tennyson and Browning. They were born within three years of one another, early in the century, and died within three years of one another, after living on through the pomp of imperialistic days, down to the end of the Victorian era. With them died something of the greatness of English poetry, for no man since has risen to claim a seat beside either of them.

This may be the result of England's political, economic, and sociological woes during the last forty or fifty years. Certainly her sweetest singers are found to exist during periods of national exaltation. Chaucer saw the renascence of Anglo-Saxon self-consciousness, which had been held in abeyance by the Normans, but which, during his lifetime, flowered more finely than before as a result of the fusing of the two bloods. Little need be said of the heady national spirit which intoxicated the lyric writers and dramatists of the Elizabethan period. Milton's day signalized the release of the nation from the corruption of a dissolute court. The Romantic Poets found their inspiration in a surge of democracy and hope for mankind which was international in scope. Browning and Tennyson wrote at a time when England's wealth and power made her the equal of the Roman Empire in Virgil's day. Since then English poetry has languished, as has England's prestige.

Alfred Tennyson was born in the country village of Somersby in Lincolnshire on the sixth of August, 1809. He was the fourth in a family of twelve children. His father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, came of a much respected family of Lincolnshire landed gentry, but had been disinherited by his father, and at the time of Alfred's birth was settled comfortably, but none too opulently, as the rector of Somersby Parish. All the children inherited from him a strong and morbid strain of melancholy, which was particularly pronounced in Alfred, and had a powerful effect on his later career.

The first six years of Tennyson's life were spent at home in close contact with the rich and lovely Lincolnshire countryside. His sensitivity to nature was almost immediately apparent in his devotion to plants, fields, sky and running water. He had a way with animals, and once on a summer evening he succeeded in calling an owl to the window of his bedroom and taming it. The family into which he was born, in spite of its inherited melancholy strain, was an unusually happy and closely knit one. It was

also an ideal one for the future poet. His brothers and sisters were talented and attractive, depending for their amusement on intellectual rather than on physical pastimes. Conversation was stimulating. There was much reading and story-telling, and a good deal of writing on the part of the children, who were encouraged in these pursuits by the scholarly bent and excellent library of their father.

When Alfred was six he went to Louth to grammar school, where he stayed for five years. Here he displayed a taste for poetic composition, and followed in the steps of his brothers, Frederick and Charles, who were inveterate verse-writers already. In point of volume, however, he soon outstripped them, and by the time he was thirteen or fourteen he had composed an epic of 6,000 lines, a long play in blank verse, and a quantity of shorter pieces. On his return from Louth his education was continued at home by his father. He was not an exceptional student, but he had an enduring love for the classics, and when the time came for his matriculation at Cambridge he was able to recite from memory the entire Odes of Horace.

His first venture into print was made in 1827 when he and his brother Charles published anonymously a joint collection of short verses called *Poems by Two Brothers*. They were scholarly, but of no exceptional merit, and in common with the youthful effusions of most poets, they are not generally included in Tennyson's collected works. The next year the boys entered Cambridge together. Here they lived a quiet and secluded life for a time, both being extremely shy, but gradually they made friends, and were finally received into a group known as "The Apostles." Among them were Monkton Milnes, Richard Trench, James Spedding, Arthur Hallam, Edward Fitzgerald, W. H. Thompson, W. H. Brookfield, J. M. Noble, and others, most of whom became distinguished in later life. This group was one of the best that could have been imagined for developing the talents and personality of such a man as Tennyson. His response to its literary and intellectual atmosphere was immediate. He continued to write poetry, won the Chancellor's Prize medal with a poem "Timbuctoo," and showed continually greater promise in his lyrics. He was looked on with much respect, and was generally regarded by his friends and preceptors as a man marked for greater things. He was grave and reserved, and apt to be moody, but the warming glow of the Apostles, particularly Hallam, made his college life a happy one, and gave him enough courage to publish in 1830 his first signed volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. This book revealed him as a poet of extraordinary promise, with an exceptionally delicate and resourceful ear for words. However, it also showed him as having not yet achieved proper control over verse forms or over his soaring imagination. It was partly praised, partly criticized. The criticism Tennyson could not stomach, and he struck out violently at it, a trait which he exhibited until the end of his life.

His friendship with Hallam deepened until the two men were almost inseparable. Hallam spent much of his time visiting at Somersby, and in 1831 he became engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. This year and the next were two of the best in Tennyson's life. In spite of the death of his father in February, he was in continually high spirits. His health was excellent and he was almost never melancholy. During this time he wrote much of the superb verse which appeared at the end of 1832 under the title, *Poems*.

As the work of a young man of twenty-three, *Poems* represents one of the most remarkable early flowerings of mature genius in the history of English literature. The full force of his magnificent control of words was poured out for the first time. Gone was the over-sweetness and immaturity of the earlier volume, the shaky craftsmanship and riotousness of the verse forms for which Coleridge had rightly criticized him two years earlier. If there had been any doubt before as to Tennyson's rank, there was now none in the minds of those who had read and appreciated "Oenone," "The Lady of Shalott," "Mariana in the South," "The Lotos-Eaters," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Dream of Fair Women," and many others. He was hailed as a new standard bearer by advanced and discerning critics. But in spite of the volume's exceptional merits, there was again a good deal of adverse criticism, and again the author writhed and groaned under it.

In 1833 Arthur Hallam died in Vienna of a ruptured blood vessel in his brain. This plunged Tennyson into a profound state of gloom which lasted for the better part of ten years. Hypochondria and melancholy descended on him with an overpowering weight. He sat about at Somersby, doing little or nothing for months at a time beyond brooding and smoking his pipe. His health was bad and there was some family alarm at it. But for a man of his talents, this could not go on forever. Gradually he began doing a little writing and considerable studying. He commenced work on two ambitious and later successful undertakings, the *Idylls of the King* and *In Memoriam*. Finally, in 1842, he published a two-volume edition of his poems, containing much new material. He was still inclined to be a solitary, brooding man, but he was occasionally seen in the houses of his friends in London, and by degrees his life became more nearly what it had been before.

Since the death of their father, the Tennysons had been living in fairly straitened circumstances. This had never bothered Alfred much, until he was induced by a speculator to put all his savings and entire small inheritance into a scheme for carving wood into patterns by machinery. This collapsed, leaving him penniless and in such a state of complete physical and nervous prostration that his life was feared for and he was placed in a sanitarium. His health and spirits gradually improved until he was able to leave, but his financial condition remained acute. The future looked

black, so black that his friends took it upon themselves to do something about his utter poverty, and prevailed upon the government to give him a pension of £200 a year. This was a life-saver. It rallied him at a time when he most sorely needed it; it enabled him to devote his attention to an important work, *The Princess*, on which he was engaged at the time; and it helped pay for treatment during another siege of hypochondria and melancholy in 1847, an aftermath of the first.

He still had his critical difficulties. The publication of *The Princess*, which contains some of the loveliest lyrics in the English language, resulted in a sad shaking of heads over him by Carlyle and Fitzgerald, both of whom he had come to know, and whose opinions were of great current weight.

These years were ones of gradually strengthening reputation. He made a number of literary friends, and was quite often seen in their circles. Among them were Thackeray, and Robert Browning, with whom he developed a long and lasting friendship. This was also a period of gathering of his literary forces, which had been more or less scattered during the past few years. He had many projects in mind. *In Memoriam*, on which he had worked spasmodically ever since the death of Hallam, was published in 1850 anonymously. It is a great poem, and a great tribute to his dearest college friend. There was a good deal of discussion and speculation about its authorship, and some criticism. Its structural weaknesses (the result of the haphazard way the poem had been composed), obvious even today in the blinding light of Tennyson's fame, were pounced upon. One reviewer expressed the opinion that the poem was probably the outpourings from the "full heart of the widow of a military man." However, the public reaction to his work was more and more favorable. His life was more secure and stable than it had been since his college days. He was earning more money, and he took advantage of this to marry Miss Emily Sarah Sellwood, to whom he had been engaged for ten years.

It has been said by Tennyson, and affirmed over and over again by his friends, that his marriage was the greatest blessing of his life, and a very important contribution to his success as a poet. By all accounts an intelligent and noble woman, his wife provided a cheerful and stabilizing domestic atmosphere, made her husband more generally happy than at any time in his early life, and bore him two children, of whom he was exceedingly fond. She was well educated and possessed of more than average talents, yet she always remained in the background, content to occupy herself with the provision of a home and family for her husband.

With his marriage the tone of Tennyson's life changed, and the honors began to roll in, elevating him to a position in the world of English letters that has been held by no other poet during his own lifetime. He twice refused a baronetcy, but later in life accepted a peerage. He became a friend of Gladstone and also of Queen Victoria, to whom he was first presented in

1862. The wave of fame and success was started by his being appointed to the poet laureateship, which had been left vacant by the death of Wordsworth. He took his duties as laureate very seriously, although this and subsequent honors made him uncomfortable, and two famous poems, "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" and "The Charge of the Light Brigade," were among the immediate results of his official tenure.

In 1865 he published *Maud*, a poem on which he had perhaps worked harder than on any other, and into which he had poured more passion and violent emotion. It is a masterpiece, and its author may well be excused for his wrath when it was received with little grace by a public which had come to expect a calmer and more directly appealing kind of verse from him. He had stormed before at criticism, but this was his heaviest burden, and his sensibilities were seriously wounded by it. He became brooding and remote, particularly as his increasing fame began to interfere with his privacy, and he made himself more and more inaccessible until he became the object of tremendous general speculation and curiosity. He traveled with his wife now, visiting Norway and Portugal, working all the time at a series of Arthurian legends which developed finally into the complete *Idylls of the King*. These were published at intervals from 1859 to 1872, with the exception of "Balin and Balan" which was added in 1885. The *Idylls* were more enthusiastically received by an adoring public than it is possible to imagine. With their publication he found himself for the first time universally recognized as a great poet.

In 1862 *Enoch Arden* was published and 60,000 copies were sold rapidly. This marked the height of his popularity. The period from then on to his death was signalized by a very gradual decline from this pinnacle. There are various reasons for this. One is that the best of his work had been done, another that he spent the latter years of his life vainly trying to establish himself as a dramatist, and another that few men, however gifted, can support extravagant praise indefinitely. This latter reaction was particularly to be expected in Tennyson's case because of the extent of the rhapsodies he had evoked; and it continued on into the 1920's. Since then his work has tended to seek a more fitting level. Another contribution to his temporary eclipse, and a significant one, is found in the waxing strength and reputations of other poets, particularly Browning, Swinburne, and the Pre-Raphaelites, who tended to take the spotlight away from him who had been enjoying it alone for so many years.

Tennyson's preoccupation with the theater began with the publication in 1875 of *Queen Mary*. He had in his mind the construction of a panorama of England's history by a series of sweeping tragedies, and to this end he bent his energies with a determination which is not quite understandable in view of the general apathy with which his efforts were persistently met. It is possible that he regarded indifference and condemnation only as further manifestations of the criticism he had found so hard to

swallow in his youth, and which was later proved to be unfounded. At any rate, he continued to pour out plays, starting with *Harold* in 1876, and following it with *The Falcon* in 1879, *The Cup* in 1881, *The Promise of May* in 1882, and *Becket* in 1884. *Becket* was the last of his dramatic efforts (until he wrote *The Foresters* just before his death in 1892) and after its completion he seemed to realize that success in this direction was not to be his, although he did not become resigned to it.

Taken as a whole, these plays are no mean achievement. They are epic in scope, dignified and poetic in content, but they are not particularly dramatic, and never seem to have come alive on the stage. *Harold* is perhaps the one best suited for production, but ironically enough, it has not been staged.

With the waning of the dramatic fever came an increased activity in Tennyson's poetic output. He was now nearly eighty but he continued to write with great vigor. *Tiresias and Other Poems* was published in 1885, and *Locksley Hall 60 Years After* in 1886. These were followed in 1889 with *Demeter and Other Poems*, and the three volumes are an astonishing tribute to the strong frame and mind of their ageing author. Those who knew him at this time have remembered best the calm patriarchal power which seemed a part of him, and which apparently would carry him on indefinitely. But soon after the publication of *Demeter* he suffered a severe shock in the death of his old and dear friend Robert Browning. He was now alone. All his friends and most of the literary titans of the century were gone, and for about a year he seems to have felt keenly that he had long outlived his time. However, even this failed to daunt him entirely. He rallied strongly and in a year or two was in good health and spirits, working hard at a series of poems which comprise the body of the posthumous volume, *The Death of Oenone*.

In August, 1892, he was eighty-four years old, and his strength had suddenly begun to wane alarmingly. Even so, his faculties were crystal-clear up to the day of his death, so that on the afternoon of October 6th he was able to derive great pleasure from reading *Cymbeline*. He died that night, slipping from life with a peacefulness and calm which was reflected in the beauty of the moonlight countryside he loved so much. He was buried next to Browning in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

## TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there;*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
'She wrought her people lasting good;*

*'Her court was pure; her life serene;  
God gave her peace; her land reposed;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen:*

*'And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*'By shaping some august decree  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

*March, 1851.*



# JUVENILIA

## CLARIBEL

### A MELODY

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall;  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone;  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone;  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

## NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be aweary of blowing  
Over the sky?  
When will the clouds be aweary of fleeting?  
When will the heart be aweary of beating?  
And nature die?  
Never, O, never, nothing will die;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;  
All things will change  
Thro' eternity.  
'T is the world's winter;  
Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago;  
Earth is dry to the centre,  
But spring, a new comer,  
A spring rich and strange,  
Shall make the winds blow  
Round and round,  
Thro' and thro',  
Here and there,  
Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range;  
For even and morn  
Ever will be  
Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

### ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing  
Under my eye;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing  
Over the sky.  
One after another the white clouds are fleeting;  
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating  
Full merrily;  
Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow;  
The wind will cease to blow;  
The clouds will cease to fleet;  
The heart will cease to beat;  
For all things must die.  
All things must die.

## LEONINE ELEGIACS

Spring will come never more.  
O, vanity!  
Death waits at the door.  
See! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking.  
We are call'd—we must go.  
Laid low, very low,  
In the dark we must lie.  
The merry glees are still;  
The voice of the birds  
Shall no more be heard,  
Nor the wind on the hill.  
O, misery!  
Hark! death is calling  
While I speak to ye,  
The jaw is falling,  
The red cheek paling,  
The strong limbs failing;  
Ice with the warm blood mixing;  
The eyeballs fixing.  
Nine times goes the passing bell:  
Ye merry souls, farewell.  
The old earth  
Had a birth,  
As all men know,  
Long ago.  
And the old earth must die.  
So let the warm winds range,  
And the blue wave beat the shore;  
For even and morn  
Ye will never see  
Thro' eternity.  
All things were born.  
Ye will come never more,  
For all things must die.

## LEONINE ELEGIACS

Low-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming;  
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only the far river shines.  
Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing bushes,  
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.  
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the grasshopper carolleth clearly;  
Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly the owlet halloos;  
Winds creep, dew falls chilly: in her first sleep earth breathes stilly:  
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth; the glimmering water outfloweth;  
 Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark hyaline.  
 Low-throned Hesper is stayed between the two peaks; but the Naiad  
 Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her breast.  
 The ancient poetess singeth that Hesperus all things bringeth,  
 Smoothing the wearied mind: bring me my love, Rosalind.  
 Thou comest morning or even; she cometh not morning or even.  
 False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

### OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O God! my God! have mercy now.  
 I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou  
 Didst die for me, for such as *me*,  
 Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
 And that my sin was as a thorn  
 Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
 Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,  
 In this extremest misery  
 Of ignorance, I should require  
 A sign! and if a bolt of fire 10  
 Would rive the slumbrous summer noon  
 While I do pray to Thee alone,  
 Think my belief would stronger grow!  
 Is not my human pride brought low?  
 The boastings of my spirit still?  
 The joy I had in my free-will  
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?  
 And what is left to me but Thou,  
 And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
 Christians with happy countenances— 20  
 And children all seem full of Thee!  
 And women smile with saint-like glances  
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
 Above Thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And Thou and peace to earth were born.  
 Good-will to me as well as all—  
 I one of them; my brothers they;  
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day; 30  
 And trust and hope till things should cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

How sweet to have a common faith!  
 To hold a common scorn of death!  
 And at a burial to hear  
 The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, whene'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be 40  
 The trustful infant on the knee,  
 Who lets his rosy fingers play  
 About his mother's neck, and knows  
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes!  
 They comfort him by night and day;  
 They light his little life alway;  
 He hath no thought of coming woes;  
 He hath no care of life or death;  
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
 Because the Spirit of happiness 50  
 And perfect rest so inward is;  
 And loveth so his innocent heart,  
 Her temple and her place of birth,  
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
 Life of the fountain there, beneath  
 Its salient springs, and far apart,  
 Hating to wander out on earth,  
 Or breathe into the hollow air,  
 Whose chillness would make visible  
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath, 60  
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
 Fulfils him with beatitude.  
 O, sure it is a special care  
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
 To arm in proof, and guard about  
 With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were 70  
 As thine, my mother, when with brows  
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
 In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
 For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
 For me unworthy!—and beheld  
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
 The beauty and repose of faith,  
 And the clear spirit shining thro'.  
 O, wherefore do we grow awry  
 From roots which strike so deep? why dare

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Paths in the desert? Could not I  
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt, 80  
 To the earth—until the ice would melt  
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
 What devil had the heart to scathe  
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the dew  
 From thine own lily, when thy grave  
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
 Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
 So little love for thee? But why  
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray  
 To one who heeds not, who can save 90  
 But will not? Great in faith, and strong  
 Against the grief of circumstance  
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
 Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
 Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
 Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
 At matins and at evensong,  
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive, 100  
 In deep and daily prayers wouldst strive  
 To reconcile me with thy God.  
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
 At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—  
 'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
 My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'  
 Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod  
 And chastisement of human pride;  
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
 Betwixt me and the light of God; 110  
 That hitherto I had defied  
 And had rejected God—that grace  
 Would drop from His o'er-brimming love,  
 As manna on my wilderness,  
 If I would pray—that God would move  
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,  
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
 Would issue tears of penitence  
 Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!  
 I think that pride hath now no place 120  
 Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe them? Why not yet  
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
 Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea

At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
 After a tempest rib and fret  
 The broad-imbased beach, why he  
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
 And ripples of an inland mere?  
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
 Draw down into his vexed pools  
 All that blue heaven which hues and paves  
 The other? I am too forlorn,  
 Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
 My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
 Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

130

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,  
 The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
 When I went forth in quest of truth,  
 'It is man's privilege to doubt,  
 If so be that from doubt at length  
 Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
 An image with profulgent brows  
 And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
 Of running fires and fluid range  
 Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
 This excellence and solid form  
 Of constant beauty. For the ox

140

150

Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
 The horned valleys all about,  
 And hollows of the fringed hills  
 In summer heats, with placid lows  
 Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
 About his hoof. And in the flocks  
 The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
 And raceth freely with his fere,  
 And answers to his mother's calls  
 From the flower'd furrow. In a time  
 Of which he wots not, run short pains  
 Thro' his warm heart; and then, from whence  
 He knows not, on his light there falls  
 A shadow; and his native slope,  
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
 And something in the darkness draws  
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
 Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
 Living, but that he shall live on?  
 Shall we not look into the laws

160

170

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Of life and death, and things that seem,  
And things that be, and analyze  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,  
Whom call I idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
Enlighten me. O, teach me yet  
Somewhat before the heavy clod  
Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

180

O weary life! O weary death!  
O spirit and heart made desolate!  
O damned vacillating state!

186

### THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep,  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee  
About his shadowy sides; above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell  
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.  
There hath he lain for ages, and will lie  
Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

### SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'



## LILIAN

The streams, through many a liled row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'

## LILIAN

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Clasps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

## II

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks:  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughs dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
Then away she flies.

## III

Prythee weep, May Lilian!  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian;  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:  
Prythee weep, May Lilian!

## IV

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

### ISABEL

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;  
The laws of marriage character'd in gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,  
Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;  
A courage to endure and to obey;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it absorbs  
With swifter movement and in purer light  
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother;  
A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite  
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—  
Shadow forth thee:—the world hath not another  
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
And thou of God in thy great charity)  
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'  
*Measure for Measure*

WITH blackest moss the flower-pots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all;  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
     She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
     He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead!'

10

Her tears fell with the dews at even;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
     She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
     He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead!'

20

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light;  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low  
 Came to her; without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
 About the lonely moated grange.  
     She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
     He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
     I would that I were dead!'  
 About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.

30

40

Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

50

60

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead!'

70

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense; but most she loathed the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then said she, 'I am very dreary,  
 He will not come,' she said;  
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 O God, that I were dead!'

80

## TO

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
The knots that tangle human creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and strain  
The heart until it bleeds,  
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
Roof not a glance so keen as thine;  
If aught of prophecy be mine,  
Thou wilt not live in vain.

## II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow;  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
Can do away that ancient lie;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

## III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athlete bold.  
And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;  
Like that strange angel which of old,  
Until the breaking of the light,  
Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.

## MADELINE

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,

Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of flitting change.

## II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles; but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be fleeter?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
     Who may know?  
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
     Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
     From one another,  
     Each to each is dearest brother;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
     Momently shot into each other.  
     All the mystery is thine;  
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
     Ever varying Madeline.

## III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
 By veering passion fann'd,  
     About thee breaks and dances:  
 When I would kiss thy hand,  
 The flush of anger'd shame  
     O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown:  
 But when I turn away,  
 Thou, willing me to stay,  
     Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,  
     But, looking fixedly the while,  
     All my bounding heart entanglest  
     In a golden-netted smile;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss  
 Thy taper fingers amorously,

## SONG — THE OWL

Again thou blushest angrily;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG—THE OWL

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice, untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
But I cannot mimic it;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o!

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
     The forward-flowing tide of time;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
     For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

10

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue;  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
 And broider'd sofas on each side.  
     In sooth it was a goodly time,  
     For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

20

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
 The outlet, did I turn away  
 The boat-head down a broad canal  
 From the main river sluiced, where all  
 The sloping of the moonlit sward  
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
 Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
 Adown to where the water slept.  
     A goodly place, a goodly time,  
     For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

30

A motion from the river won  
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
 Until another night in night  
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,



Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb 40  
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
 Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
 From the green rivage many a fall  
 Of diamond rillets musical,  
 Thro' little crystal arches low  
 Down from the central fountain's flow 50  
 Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
 A goodly place, a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
 A walk with vari-colored shells  
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
 All round about the fragrant marge  
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn 60  
 In order, eastern flowers large,  
 Some dropping low their crimson bells  
 Half-closed, and others studded wide  
 With disks and tiars, fed the time  
 With odor in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
 In closest coverture upsprung,  
 The living airs of middle night  
 Died round the bulbul as he sung; 70  
 Not he, but something which possess'd  
 The darkness of the world, delight,  
 Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
 Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
 Apart from place, withholding time,  
 But flattering the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
 Slumber'd; the solemn palms were ranged  
 Above, unwoo'd of summer wind; 80  
 A sudden splendor from behind  
 Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame;  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

90

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honor of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

100

110

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humor of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

120

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof

## ODE TO MEMORY

In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time 130  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone; 140  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diaper'd  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd 150  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him—in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

## ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO ———

THOU who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present, O, haste,  
Visit my low desire!  
Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

On the white day, but robed in soften'd light  
    Of orient state.  
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
    Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,  
    When she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
Which in wintertide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.

20

### III

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
    And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast;  
Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind  
    Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
    Because they are the earliest of the year.  
Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.  
The eddying of her garments caught from thee  
The light of thy great presence; and the cope  
    Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful;  
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
    The illimitable years.  
O, strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

30

40

### IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!  
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines  
    Unto mine inner eye,  
    Divinest Memory!  
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall

50

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the gray hillside,

The seven elms, the poplars four

That stand beside my father's door,

And chiefly from the brook that loves

To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,

Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,

The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland;

O, hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,

What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

60

70

Large dowries doth the raptured eye

To the young spirit present

When first she is wed,

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,

With music and sweet showers

Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,

In setting round thy first experiment

With royal framework of wrought gold;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery

Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls

Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery

80

And newness of thine art so pleased thee

That all which thou hast drawn of fairest

Or boldest since but lightly weighs

With thee unto the love thou bearest

The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,

Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labor of thine early days,

No matter what the sketch might be:

90

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Whether the high field on the bushless pike,  
 Or even a sand-built ridge  
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
 Overblown with murmurs harsh, 100  
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
 Where from the frequent bridge,  
 Like emblems of infinity,  
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky;  
 Or a garden bower'd close  
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near 110  
 Purple-spiked lavender:  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,  
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
 We may hold converse with all forms  
 Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone 120  
 Were how much better than to own  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O, strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers.  
     To himself he talks;  
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and sigh  
     In the walks;  
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
 Of the mouldering flowers.  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;

## A CHARACTER

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
    An hour before death;  
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
    And the breath  
Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
And the year's last rose.  
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, 'The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things;'  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;  
Then looking as 't were in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
More purely when they wished to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by;  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold:  
 Upon himself himself did feed;  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

### THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
 He saw thro' his own soul.  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
 An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded  
 The secretest walks of fame:  
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
 And of so fierce a flight,  
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
 Them earthward till they lit;  
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,  
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew  
 Where'er they fell, behold,  
 Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
 The winged shafts of truth,  
 To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
 Tho' one did fling the fire;



Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit;  
Vex not thou the poet's mind,  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river,  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

## II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;  
All the place is holy ground;

Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
 Come not here.  
 Holy water will I pour  
 Into every spicy flower  
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
 The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
 In your eye there is death,  
 There is frost in your breath  
 Which would blight the plants.  
 Where you stand you cannot hear  
 From the groves within  
 The wild-bird's din.  
 In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.  
 It would fall to the ground if you came in.  
 In the middle leaps a fountain  
 Like sheet lightning,  
 Ever brightening  
 With a low melodious thunder;  
 All day and all night it is ever drawn  
 From the brain of the purple mountain  
 Which stands in the distance yonder.  
 It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
 And the mountain draws it from heaven above,  
 And it sings a song of undying love;  
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,  
 You never would hear it, your ears are so dull;  
 So keep where you are; you are foul with sin;  
 It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,  
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest  
 To little harps of gold; and while they mused,  
 Whispering to each other half in fear,  
 Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.  
 Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blossoming shore?  
 Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;  
 Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
 From wandering over the lea;  
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells  
 High over the full-toned sea.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

O, hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me;  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;  
Here it is only the mew that wails;  
We will sing to you all the day. 20  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land  
Over the islands free;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;  
Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,  
And sweet is the color of cove and cave, 30  
And sweet shall your welcome be.  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we.  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words;  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee.  
O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore 40  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?  
Whither away? listen and stay; mariner, mariner, fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide;  
Careless tenants they!

### II

All within is dark as night:  
In the windows is no light;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

### III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see

The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV

Come away; no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away; for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell,  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us!

## THE DYING SWAN

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

10

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

20

## A DIRGE

### III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow. At first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the sougning reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

Now is done thy long day's work;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
Let them rave.  
Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

## III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?  
    Let them rave.  
Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
    Let them rave.

## IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.  
    Let them rave.  
Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
    Let them rave.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
    Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
    Let them rave.

## VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidery of the purple clover.  
    Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
    Let them rave.

## VII

Wild words wander here and there;  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused;  
    But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear

In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight.  
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these walks are mine.'  
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight;  
Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is thine;  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death.  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
    Oriana.  
There is no rest for me below,  
    Oriana.  
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
    Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
    Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
    Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
    Oriana;  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
    Oriana,  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
    Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
    Oriana.

Ere I rode into the fight,  
     Oriana,  
 While blissful tears blinded my sight  
 By star-shine and by moonlight,  
     Oriana,  
 I to thee my troth did plight,  
     Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
     Oriana;  
 She watch'd my crest among them all,  
     Oriana;  
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
     Oriana,  
 Atween me and the castle wall,  
     Oriana.

30

The bitter arrow went aside,  
     Oriana;  
 The false, false arrow went aside,  
     Oriana;  
 The damned arrow glanced aside,  
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
     Oriana!  
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
     Oriana!

40

O, narrow, narrow was the space,  
     Oriana!  
 Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
     Oriana.  
 O, deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
 The battle deepen'd in its place,  
     Oriana;  
 But I was down upon my face,  
     Oriana.

50

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
     Oriana!  
 How could I rise and come away,  
     Oriana?  
 How could I look upon the day?  
 They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
     Oriana—  
 They should have trod me into clay,  
     Oriana

60



## C I R C U M S T A N C E

O breaking heart that will not break,  
    Oriana!  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
    Oriana!  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana.  
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana?

I cry aloud; none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!  
    Oriana!  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana!  
All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
    Oriana.  
A weary, weary way I go,  
    Oriana!

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
    Oriana,  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
    Oriana.  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
    Oriana.  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
    Oriana.

## C I R C U M S T A N C E

Two children in two neighbor villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed;  
Two children in one hamlet born and bred:  
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

### THE MERMAN

Who would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne?

#### II

I would be a merman bold,  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power;  
But at night I would roam abroad and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower;  
And holding them back by their flowing locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly;  
And then we would wander away, away,  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

#### III

There would be neither moon nor star;  
But the wave would make music above us afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic night—  
Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
All night, merrily, merrily.  
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands between,  
All night, merrily, merrily,  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almondine;

## THE MERMAID

Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.  
O, what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

### II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III

But at night I would wander away, away,  
 I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,  
 And lightly vault from the throne and play  
 With the mermen in and out of the rocks;  
 We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,  
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
 But if any came near I would call, and shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I would leap  
 From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;  
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea.  
 They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,  
 In the purple twilights under the sea;  
 But the king of them all would carry me,  
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
 In the branching jaspers under the sea.  
 Then all the dry-pied things that be  
 In the hueless mosses under the sea  
 Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
 All looking up for the love of me.  
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
 All things that are forked, and horned, and soft  
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,  
 All looking down for the love of me.

## ADELINE

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
     Faintly smiling Adeline,  
     Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
     But beyond expression fair  
     With thy floating flaxen hair;  
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
     Take the heart from out my breast.  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone.  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dew?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?  
Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
    When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
    Wander from the side of the morn,  
    Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
    With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
    And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
    Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
    Spiritual Adeline.

### MARGARET

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
    Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
    Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
    From all things outward you have won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
    Between the rainbow and the sun.  
The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
    Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
    Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
    Like the tender amber round  
    Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## M A R G A R E T

### II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
To hear the murmur of the strife,  
But enter not the toil of life.  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
You are the evening star, always  
Remaining betwixt dark and bright;  
Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
Float by you on the verge of night.

### III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
What songs below the waning stars  
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
Just ere the falling axe did part  
The burning brain from the true heart,  
Even in her sight he loved so well?

### IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
And gave you on your natal day.  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
Keeps real sorrow far away.  
You move not in such solitudes,  
You are not less divine,  
But more human in your moods,  
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
And less aerially blue,  
But ever trembling thro' the dew  
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
Come down, come down, and hear me speak.  
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

The sun is just about to set,  
The arching limes are tall and shady,  
And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
Where all day long you sit between  
Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
Look out below your bower-eaves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

### ROSALIND

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,  
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,  
Careless both of wind and weather,  
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
Up or down the streaming wind?

### II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,  
The shadow rushing up the sea,  
The lightning flash atween the rains,  
The sunlight driving down the lea,  
The leaping stream, the very wind,  
That will not stay, upon his way,  
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
Is not so clear and bold and free  
As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
You care not for another's pains,  
Because you are the soul of joy,  
Bright metal all without alloy.  
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
And flashes off a thousand ways,  
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays,  
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
Keen with triumph, watching still  
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;  
But oftentimes they flash and glitter



### ELEÄNORE

Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight.

### III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind.  
Too long you keep the upper skies;  
Too long you roam and wheel at will;  
But we must hood your random eyes,  
That care not whom they kill,  
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you love.  
When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,  
From North to South,  
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
And kiss away the bitter words  
From off your rosy mouth.

### ELEÄNORE

Thy dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,  
For there is nothing here  
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighborhood  
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades;  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,

And the hearts of purple hills,  
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
     The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
     With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
     Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

30

## III

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
 On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded  
 With many a deep-hued bell-like flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
 And the crag that fronts the even,  
     All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsoned over an inland mere,  
     Eleänore!

40

## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore  
 The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
     Eleänore?  
 The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
     Eleänore?  
 Every turn and glance of thine,  
 Every lineament divine,  
     Eleänore,  
 And the steady sunset glow

50

## ELEÄNORE

That stays upon thee? For in thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
Like two streams of incense free  
From one censer in one shrine,  
Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as tho'  
They were modulated so  
To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

I stand before thee, Eleänore;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
Float on to me. I would I were  
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleänore!

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,  
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
In thy large eyes that, overpower'd quite,  
I cannot veil or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light.  
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Even while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain  
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,  
And draw itself to what it was before;  
So full, so deep, so slow,  
Thought seems to come and go  
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
 Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere, 100  
 Grow golden all about the sky;  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
     In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
     And luxury of contemplation.  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
     Rolling slide, and lying still  
     Shadow forth the banks at will,  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
     Pressing up against the land  
     With motions of the outer sea;  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
     Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
     Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
     Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
 And so would languish evermore, 120  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,  
 While the amorous odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and the moon;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined;  
     I watch thy grace, and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
     While I muse upon thy face;  
 And a languid fire creeps 130  
     Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly. Soon  
     From thy rose-red lips my name  
 Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
     My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
     I lose my color, I lose my breath,  
     I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.

I die with my delight before  
    I hear what I would hear from thee;  
    Yet tell my name again to me,  
I *would* be dying evermore,  
So dying ever, Eleänore.

## KATE

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright black hair,  
    Her rapid laughs wild and shrill,  
As laughs of the woodpecker  
    From the bosom of a hill.  
'T is Kate—she sayeth what she will,  
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
    Clear as the twanging of a harp.  
Her heart is like a throbbing star.  
Kate hath a spirit ever strung  
    Like a new bow, and bright and sharp  
    As edges of the scimitar.  
Whence shall she take a fitting mate?  
    For Kate no common love will feel;  
My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
    As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'  
Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'  
    Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;  
Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.  
I would I were an armed knight,  
Far-famed for well-won enterprise,  
    And wearing on my swarthy brows  
The garland of new-wreathed emprise;  
    For in a moment I would pierce  
The blackest files of clanging fight,  
And strongly strike to left and right,  
    In dreaming of my lady's eyes.  
O, Kate loves well the bold and fierce;  
But none are bold enough for Kate,  
She cannot find a fitting mate.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

### 'MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS'

My life is full of weary days,  
But good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wander'd into other ways;  
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go,  
Shake hands once more; I cannot sink  
So far—far down, but I shall know  
Thy voice, and answer from below.

#### II

When in the darkness over me  
The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,  
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood  
Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
And rugged barks begin to bud,  
And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with may,  
Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
And on my clay her darnel grow;  
Come only, when the days are still,  
And at my headstone whisper low,  
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

### EARLY SONNETS

#### I

TO .

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,  
And ebb into a former life, or seem  
To lapse far back in some confused dream  
To states of mystical similitude,

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
So that we say, 'All this hath been before,  
All this hath been, I know not when or where;'  
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,  
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true—  
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
That, tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
Methought that I had often met with you,  
And either lived in either's heart and speech.

## II

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;  
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:  
Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good Sabbath, while the wornout clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## III

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea;—  
Which with increasing might doth forward flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
Even as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

### IV

#### ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased  
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled  
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced  
For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-erased)  
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led  
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.  
There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:  
High things were spoken there, unhanded down;  
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

#### BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,  
Madman!—to chain with chains, and bind with bands  
That island queen who sways the floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls,—lit by sure hands,—  
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with smoke,—  
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires  
Flamed over; at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him; late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers.

### VI

#### POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,  
And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown  
The fields and out of every smouldering town



## EARLY SONNETS

Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown,—  
Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall these things be?  
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three;  
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right—  
A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

### VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,  
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

### VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,  
And win all eyes with all accomplishment;  
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beauteous breast  
That once had power to rob it of content.  
A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could move,  
A ghost of passion that no smiles restore—  
For ah! the slight coquette, she cannot love,  
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,  
She still would take the praise, and care no more.

### IX

WAN Sculptor, weepest thou to take the cast  
Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie?

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

O, sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,  
In painting some dead friend from memory?  
Weep on; beyond his object Love can last.  
His object lives; more cause to weep have I:  
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
No tears of Love, but tears that Love can die.  
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—  
Ah! pity—hint it not in human tones,  
But breathe it into earth and close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the pits  
Which some green Christmas crams with weary bones.

### X

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,  
And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear,—if I were loved by thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine,  
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,  
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.  
'T were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,  
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,  
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge  
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

### XI

#### THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was tied,  
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see;  
Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for me!  
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.'  
And then, the couple standing side by side,  
Love lighted down between them full of glee,  
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee,  
'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride.'  
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
For while the tender service made thee weep,  
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,  
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,  
And thought, 'My life is sick of single sleep:  
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!'

*THE LADY OF SHALOTT  
AND OTHER POEMS*

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd, 20  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
    Skimming down to Camelot:  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early 30  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly

From the river winding clearly,  
 Down to tower'd Camelot;  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers 'Tis the fairy  
 Lady of Shalott.

## PART II

There she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colors gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
 To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot;  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

50

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
 And music, went to Camelot;  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed:  
 'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
 The Lady of Shalott.

# THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot;  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armor rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

90

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot;  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

100

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.

110

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seër in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance 130  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot; 140  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
    Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
    *The Lady of Shalott.*

160

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
    All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
    *The Lady of Shalott.'*

170

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shines,  
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines;  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
    To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

10

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.  
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
    'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
    To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

20

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load.'  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.  
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,  
'That won his praises night and morn?'  
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

30

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
But day increased from heat to heat,  
On stony drought and steaming salt;  
Till now at noon she slept again,  
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,  
And heard her native breezes pass,  
And runlets babbling down the glen.  
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
And murmuring, as at night and morn,  
She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,  
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream;  
She felt he was and was not there.  
She woke; the babble of the stream  
Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
The river-bed was dusty-white;  
And all the furnace of the light  
Struck up against the blinding wall.  
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
More inward than at night or morn,  
'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

50

60

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,  
To what is loveliest upon earth.'  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say  
'But now thy beauty flows away,  
So be alone for evermore.'  
'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,



## THE TWO VOICES

'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
Is this the end, to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

70

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day decreased,  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.  
'The day to night,' she made her moan,  
'The day to night, the night to morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

80

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent spheres  
Heaven over heaven rose the night.  
And weeping then she made her moan,  
'The night comes on that knows not morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

90

## THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said:  
'Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:  
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk; from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

10

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said: 'When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride;  
Look up thro' night; the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:  
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:  
'No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:  
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 't were better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep;  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said: 'The years with change advance;  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Even yet.' But he: 'What drug can make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept: 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

' 'T were better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said: 'When I am gone away,  
"He dared not tarry," men will say,  
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

110

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear that is fill'd with dust  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

## THE TWO VOICES

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

130

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law;

140

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown;

150

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

160

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labor little worth.

170

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

180

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

190

## THE TWO VOICES

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?  
There is one remedy for all.'

200

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven;

210

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Even in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones;

220

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:  
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

I said: 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse;

230

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new;

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and frozen to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer:  
What is it that I may not fear?' 240

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?  
Or answer should one press his hands?  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast;  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek;  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak. 250

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonor to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave. 260

'High up the vapors fold and swim;  
About him broods the twilight dim;  
The place he knew forgetteth him.'



## THE TWO VOICES

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not death? the outward signs?

270

'I found him when my years were few;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept;  
In her still place the morning wept;  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:  
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead!"

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

280

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly;  
His heart forebodes a mystery;  
He names the name Eternity.

290

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason: many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

300

'He knows a baseness in his blood,  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

310

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced:

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

320

'A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again;

'Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man;

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days;

330

'A life of nothings, nothing worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast:

## THE TWO VOICES

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?

340

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state;

350

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again;

'So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

360

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

370

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory;

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

380

'Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he,  
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

390

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

' 'T is life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
O, life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

400

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

## THE TWO VOICES

On to God's house the people prest;  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

416

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

420

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on;  
I spoke, but answer came there none;  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
'I see the end, and know the good.'

430

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes;

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried.  
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied;

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

450

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers;  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along;  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

460

### THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

10

Yet fill my glass; give me one kiss:  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss

Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of pain  
Would God renew me from my birth,  
I'd almost live my life again;  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire;  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
( 'T was April then ), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,

I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

80

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge;  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright—  
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death;  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

100



And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

110

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;  
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits!'  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
'O, that I were beside her now!  
O, will she answer if I call?  
O, would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?'

120

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with may;  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one!  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

130

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire:  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher;  
And I was young—too young to wed:  
'Yet must I love her for your sake;  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

140

And down I went to fetch my bride:  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,

Too fearful that you should not please.  
 I loved you better for your fears,  
 I knew you could not look but well;  
 And dews, that would have fallen in tears,  
 I kiss'd away before they fell. 150

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
 The doubt my mother would not see;  
 She spoke at large of many things,  
 And at the last she spoke of me;  
 And turning look'd upon your face,  
 As near this door you sat apart,  
 And rose, and, with a silent grace  
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
 I gave you, Alice, on the day  
 When, arm in arm, we went along,  
 A pensive pair, and you were gay  
 With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
 As in the nights of old, to lie  
 Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
 While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
 And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
 That I would be the jewel 170  
 That trembles in her ear;  
 For hid in ringlets day and night,  
 I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
 About her dainty dainty waist,  
 And her heart would beat against me,  
 In sorrow and in rest;  
 And I should know if it beat right,  
 I'd clasp it round so close and tight. 180

And I would be the necklace,  
 And all day long to fall and rise  
 Upon her balmy bosom,  
 With her laughter or her sighs;  
 And I would lie so light, so light,  
 I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spell  
 True love interprets—right alone.  
 His light upon the letter dwells,  
 For all the spirit is his own. 190  
 So, if I waste words now, in truth  
 You must blame Love. His early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou are,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart;  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue forget-me-not.

200

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set;  
Many a chance the years beget;  
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret;  
Love is made a vague regret;  
Eyes with idle tears are wet;  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

220

Yet tears they shed; they had their part  
Of sorrow; for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart,  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before;  
Although the loss had brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

230

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee;  
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth  
 To yon old mill across the wolds;  
 For look, the sunset, south and north,  
 Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
 And fires your narrow casement glass,  
 Touching the sullen pool below;  
 On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA

Φ

Εμμεν ἀνῆρ.—SAPPHO.

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering might!  
 O sun, that from thy noonday height  
 Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
 Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
 Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
 Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
 I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
 Below the city's eastern towers;  
 I thirsted for the brooks, the showers;  
 I roll'd among the tender flowers;  
 I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth;  
 I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
 Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
 From my swift blood that went and came  
 A thousand little shafts of flame  
 Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
 O Love, O fire! once he drew  
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
 He cometh quickly; from below  
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
 Before him, striking on my brow.  
 In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
 And from beyond the noon a fire

Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,  
Burst into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye;  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ÆNONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.  
The purple flower droops, the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
And I am all aweary of my life.

30

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

40

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills;  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine.  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft;  
Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin  
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;  
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

60

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech  
Came down upon my heart:

'"My own Cēnone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Cēnone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven  
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt

70

# ÆNON E

The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added, "This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were due;  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

84

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight; one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piny sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her to whom  
Coming thro' heaven, like a light that grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale  
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.  
Honor," she said, "and homage, tax and toll  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
 "Which in all action is the end of all; 120  
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbor crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
 Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts. 150  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow 160



Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,  
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
Commeasure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,  
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

176

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."  
She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my sight for fear;  
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

180

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

190

206

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge,

High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone Cēnone see the morning mist  
 Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid  
 With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
 And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

226

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
 O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die.

230

241

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder comes

Across me: never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

250

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, whereso'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

260

## THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race;  
She was the fairest in the face.

The wind is howling in turret and tree,  
They were together, and she fell;  
Therefore revenge became me well.

O, the earl was fair to see!

She died; she went to burning flame;  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait.

O, the earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;  
I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head.

O, the earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest,  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.

O, the earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night;  
 I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
 The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
 As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
 Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
 O, the earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and com'b his comely head,  
 He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
 The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
 I wrap't his body in the sheet,  
 And laid him at his mother's feet.  
 O, the earl was fair to see!

## TO

### WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory—  
 For you will understand it—of a soul,  
 A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
 A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
 A glorious devil, large in heart and brain,  
 That did love beauty only—beauty seen  
 In all varieties of mould and mind—  
 And knowledge for its beauty; or if good,  
 Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
 That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters  
 That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
 Living together under the same roof,  
 And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
 And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
 Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
 Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
 Was common clay ta'en from the common earth  
 Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
 Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

### THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
 Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
 I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
 Dear soul, for all is well.'

## THE PALACE OF ART

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said  
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:  
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.'

. . . . .  
Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,

While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?’

For that sweet incense rose and never fail’d,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail’d,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain’d and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow’d grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro’ which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff’d cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem’d all dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show’d an iron coast and angry waves.  
You seem’d to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags;  
Beyond, a line of heights; and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags;  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,  
Not less than truth design'd.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonix  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

113

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne;

From one hand droop'd a crocus; one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

120

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself was there,  
Not less than life design'd.

. . . . .

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
The royal dais round.

130

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings;

150

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.



## THE PALACE OF ART

But over these she trod; and those great bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne;  
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

160

And thro' the topmost oriels' colored flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the seasons five;

180

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'T is one to me.' She—when young night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hallow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,  
'I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich and wide  
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!  
O shapes and hues that please me well!

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O Godlike isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

206

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;  
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.'

210

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd; so three years  
She prosper'd; on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
Struck thro' with pang of hell.

220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

230

## THE PALACE OF ART

'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,  
'My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore, that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white;

250

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world;  
One deep, deep silence all!'

260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,

270

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall:

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moonrise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea;

286

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found  
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
'Where I may mourn and pray.

290

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built;  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown:  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired;  
The daughter of a hundred earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that dotes on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For, were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
O, your sweet eyes, your low replies!  
A great enchantress you may be;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 There stands a spectre in your hall;  
 The guilt of blood is at your door;  
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
 You held your course without remorse,  
 To make him trust his modest worth,  
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 From you blue heavens above us bent  
 The gardener Adam and his wife  
 Smile at the claims of long descent.  
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
 'T is only noble to be good.  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 You pine among your halls and towers;  
 The languid light of your proud eyes  
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
 But sickening of a vague disease,  
 You know so ill to deal with time,  
 You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 If time be heavy on your hands,  
 Are there no beggars at your gate,  
 Nor any poor about your lands?  
 O, teach the orphan-boy to read,  
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew;  
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

### THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;  
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;  
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;  
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline;  
 But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,  
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break; <sup>11</sup>  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.<sup>20</sup>

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be;  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has woven its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers; <sup>30</sup>  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.<sup>40</sup>

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set; he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers; we had a merry day;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May; 10  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills; the frost is on the pane.  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again;  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high;  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave. 20

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid. 30  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild;  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.



If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;  
 Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;  
 Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
 And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

46

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night for evermore,  
 And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door,  
 Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green.  
 She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor.  
 Let her take 'em, they are hers; I shall never garden more;  
 But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set  
 About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good night, sweet mother; call me before the day is born.  
 All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn,  
 But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
 So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

50

## CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;  
 And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
 How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!  
 To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O, sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,  
 And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
 And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
 And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
 And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!  
 But still I think it can't be long before I find release;  
 And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

10

O, blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!  
 And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!  
 O, blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!  
 A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
 Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in;  
 Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,  
 For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for :

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
 There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet;  
 But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
 And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;  
 It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;  
 The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
 And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;  
 I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;  
 With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
 And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

30

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
 And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;  
 For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
 And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them, it's mine.'  
 And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
 And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
 Then seem'd to go right up to heaven and die among the stars.

40

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
 The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
 And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day;  
 But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;  
 There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
 If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;  
 But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O, look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;  
 He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
 And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—  
 Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

50

O, sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—  
 For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
 And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
 And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. 60

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

‘COURAGE!’ he said, and pointed toward the land,  
‘This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.’  
In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush’d; and dew’d with showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger’d low adown  
In the red West; thro’ mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border’d with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem’d the same!  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
 Between the sun and the moon upon the shore;  
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore  
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
 Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'  
 And all at once they sang, 'Our island home  
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

## CHORIC SONG

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.  
 Here are cool mosses deep,  
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
 While all things else have rest from weariness?  
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone,  
 We only toil, who are the first of things,  
 And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown;  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings,  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
 Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
 'There is no joy but calm!'—  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

20

## III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there

Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life; ah, why  
Should life all labor be?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up a climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 70  
 And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change;  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold,  
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;  
 'T is hard to settle order once again.  
 There *is* confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labor unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly—  
 With half-dropt eyelid still, 90  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—  
 To watch the emerald-color'd water falling  
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak, 100  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek;  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone;  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotus-dust is blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind. 110  
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd  
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd  
 Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;  
 Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.  
 But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song  
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;  
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil, 120  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;  
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 't is whisper'd—down in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;  
 O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
*'The Legend of Good Women,'* long ago  
 Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
 His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
 Held me above the subject, as strong gales 10  
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,  
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
 I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
 The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
 Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars;

20

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs;  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries,  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall,  
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

40

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

50

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood; fresh-wash'd in coolest dew  
The maiden splendors of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.



Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red Morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

70

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remembered to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear undertone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
'Pass freely thro'; the wood is all thine own  
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillier than chisell'd marble, standing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech; she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place:

90

'I had great beauty; ask thou not my name:  
No one can be more wise than destiny.

Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,  
I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

100

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws;  
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse:  
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place  
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years:  
My father held his hand upon his face;  
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

110

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;  
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat—  
Touch'd—and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:  
'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,  
Then when I left my home.'

120

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,  
As thunder drops fall on a sleeping sea:  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come here,  
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:  
'I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd  
All moods. 'T is long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

130

The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humor ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood:  
That makes my only woe.

‘Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony?

140

‘The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune’s neck; we sat as God by God:  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

‘We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which out-burn’d Canopus. O, my life  
In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

‘And the wild kiss, when fresh from war’s alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

150

‘And there he died: and when I heard my name  
Sigh’d forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other; with a worm I balk’d his fame.  
What else was left? look here!’—

With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish’d argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick’s bite.—

160

‘I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying robed and crown’d,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.’

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro’ all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground

170

She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn:

180

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine;  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

190

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light  
With timbrel and with song.

200

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the count of crimes  
With that wild oath.' She render'd answer high:  
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these did move  
Me from my bliss of life that Nature gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

210

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

220

'The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!

230

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

240

She lock'd her lips; she left me where I stood:  
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,  
 Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look on me;  
 I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
 If what I was I be. 250

'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!  
 O me, that I should ever see the light!  
 Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
 Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust;  
 To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely died!  
 You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
 The dagger thro' her side.' 260

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,  
 Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
 Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
 Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark  
 Ere I saw her who clasp'd in her last trance  
 Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
 A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
 Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
 Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
 Sweet as new buds in spring. 270

No memory labors longer from the deep  
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
 That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
 Into that wondrous track of dreams again!  
 But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
 Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
 In yearnings that can never be exprest  
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,  
 Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
 Faints, faded by its heat.

## THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:  
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou mayst warble, eat, and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine; the range of lawn and park;  
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry;  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once when young;

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily sighing;  
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.  
Old year, you must not die;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still, he doth not move;  
He will not see the dawn of day.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.  
The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro;  
The cricket chirps; the light burns low;  
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you.  
What is it we can do for you?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes; tie up his chin;  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,  
And a new face at the door, my friend.  
A new face at the door.



TO J. S.

TO J. S.

THE wind that beats the mountain blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost;  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;  
One went who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother; his mute dust  
I honor and his living worth;  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh  
Since that dear soul hath fallen asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I;  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance  
Of death is blown in every wind;'  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you any way,  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say;

For he too was a friend to me.  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'T were better I should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace;  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

## ON A MOURNER

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face  
To every land beneath the skies,  
Counts nothing that she meets with base,  
But lives and loves in every place;

## II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where humm'd the dropping snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe;

## III

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

## IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide Will that closes thine.

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born.

## VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombling sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars

Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII

Promising empire; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute,

Tho' power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet;  
Above her shook the starry lights;  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,  
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes!

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied past, and used  
Within the present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought;

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years;  
Cut Prejudice against the grain.  
But gentle words are always gain;  
Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise—  
It grows to guerdon after-days.  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,  
Not master'd by some modern term,  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;  
And in its season bring the law,

30

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life that, working strongly, binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals

ON A MOURNER

A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

60

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

70

O, yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes;  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke.

90

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
Who sprang from English blood!

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine—the single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden smote  
Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason:



## THE GOOSE

'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—'t was no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbors,  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labors;

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied,  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder;  
But ah! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there,  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle;  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And huri'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!'  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat,  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There rode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning:  
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

*The glass blew in, the fire blew out,*  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder;

And while on all sides breaking loose  
*Her household fled the danger,*  
Quoth she, 'The devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!'

ENGLISH IDYLS  
AND OTHER POEMS

THE EPIC

Written in 1835, but not published until 1842.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd; and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at geology and schism;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world: 'at home was little left,  
And none abroad; there was no anchor, none,  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way  
At college; but another which you had—  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt  
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—  
And then to me demanding why: 'O, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or else  
Something so said 't was nothing—that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;  
God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,  
'Why take the style of those heroic times?

For nature brings not back the mastodon,  
 Nor we those times; and why should any man  
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,'  
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth,  
 And have it; keep a thing, its use will come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;  
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen. Then at my request  
 He brought it; and the poet, little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

50

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,  
 King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
 On one side lay the ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

60

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made,—  
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
 To rule once more—but let what will be be,  
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how

70

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known.  
But now delay not; take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere;  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

104

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

110

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:  
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

130

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
 Should thus be lost forever from the earth,  
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
 What good should follow this, if this were done?  
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

140

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
 An act unprofitable, against himself?  
 The king is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
 And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
 Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;  
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

150

So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
 To all the people, winning reverence;  
 But now much honor and much fame were lost.'

160

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
 And hid Excalibur the second time,  
 And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
 'What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!

170

Authority forgets a dying king,  
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180  
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;  
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,  
 And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn, 190  
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;  
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
 Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
 And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
 'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. 200  
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 210  
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
 'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes 220  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the king,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

230

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

240

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

250

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'  
And to the barge they came. There those three queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.

But she that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white  
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon

260

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.

270



So like a shatter'd column lay the king;  
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
 For now I see the true old times are dead,  
 When every morning brought a noble chance,  
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
 Such times have been not since the light that led  
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
 Which was an image of the mighty world;  
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
 And the days darken round me, and the years,  
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge: 290  
 'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
 May He within himself make pure! but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day. 500  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
 For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—  
 To the island-valley of Avilion; 310  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume. and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

320

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
 Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell;  
 At which the parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we  
 Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;  
 I know not; but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud, as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn.  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
 'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.  
 And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
 Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams  
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with the crowd,  
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
 Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,  
 'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'  
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
 Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'  
 And, further inland, voices echoed—'Come  
 With all good things, and war shall be no more.'  
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

330

340

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## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

### OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
 When I and Eustace from the city went  
 To see the Gardener's daughter; I and he,  
 Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete  
 Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew  
 The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired 10  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—O, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of Love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her, 20  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I replied—  
My words were half in earnest, half in jest:  
'T is not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,  
A more ideal artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'  
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The Gardener's daughter; trust me, after that, 30  
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.'  
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
Altho' between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low—  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,  
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,

That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
 So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
 And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
 Would play with flying forms and images,  
 Yet this is also true, that, long before  
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
 My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
 And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
 That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
 Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
 Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;  
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
 To one that travels quickly, made the air  
 Of life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
 That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
 Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
 Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
 For ever in itself the day we went  
 To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
 Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
 Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
 Drew downward; but all else of heaven was pure  
 Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge,  
 And May with me from head to heel. And now,  
 As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were  
 The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound—  
 For those old Mays had thrice the life of these—  
 Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
 And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,  
 Leaning his horns into the neighbor field  
 And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
 Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
 The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
 But shook his song together as he near'd  
 His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
 The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;  
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;  
 The redcap whistled; and the nightingale  
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me:  
 'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,  
 These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing  
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?  
 Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
 And would they praise the heavens for what they have?'

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

And I made answer: 'Were there nothing else  
For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
That only love were cause enough for praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,  
And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,  
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North,  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge.

This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.

The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spreads his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the house.'  
He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased I turn'd,  
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught  
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—  
Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the shape—

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,  
A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the flowers  
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—

Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,  
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground.  
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose  
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd  
Into the world without; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
Which brooded round about her:

'Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,

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130

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd; but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turning wound  
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips  
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,  
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

159

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

160

So home we went, and all the livelong way  
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of art.  
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the master, Love,  
A more ideal artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,  
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of life  
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice  
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such  
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.  
And all that night I heard the watchman peal  
The sliding season; all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.  
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odors on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

179

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,  
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm  
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
Light pretexts drew me: sometimes a Dutch love  
For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream  
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more  
A word could bring the color to my cheek;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;  
Love troubled life within me, and with each

189

199

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
 One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;  
 Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
 Danced into light, and died into the shade;  
 And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
 Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,  
 Like one that never can be wholly known,  
 Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour  
 For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I will,'  
 Breathed, like a covenant of a God, to hold  
 From thence thro' all the worlds; but I rose up  
 Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
 The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

206

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
 Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,  
 Between us, in the circle of his arms  
 Enwound us both; and over many a range  
 Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
 Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
 Reveal'd their shining windows. From them clash'd  
 The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,  
 We spoke of other things; we coursed about  
 The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
 Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
 The central wish, until we settled there.

210

220

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
 Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
 Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
 A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;  
 And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
 And in the compass of three little words,  
 More musical than ever came in one,  
 The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
 Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am thine.'

230

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
 That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
 How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades  
 Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
 I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,  
 Holding the folded annals of my youth;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,  
 And with a flying finger swept my lips,

240

And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven  
Are those who, setting wide the doors that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day.' Here then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,  
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;  
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,  
And in the hollows; or as once we met  
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep?

259

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul,  
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes; the time  
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and alas!  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

## DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because  
He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said: 'My son,  
I married late, but I would wish to see



## D O R A

My grandchild on my knees before I die;  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well  
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter; he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora. Take her for your wife;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
For many years.' But William answer'd short:  
'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora!' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:  
'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;  
Consider, William, take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish,  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
And never more darken my doors again.'  
But William answer'd madly, bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,  
And hired himself to work within the fields;  
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
'It cannot be; my uncle's mind will change!'

And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William; then distresses came on him,  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me

This evil came on William at the first.  
 But, Mary, for the sake of him, that's gone,  
 And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
 And for this orphan, I am come to you.  
 You know there has not been for these five years  
 So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,  
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
 Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad  
 Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

80

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
 Far off the farmer came into the field  
 And spied her not, for none of all his men  
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
 But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
 The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
 And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?  
 Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'  
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
 And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'  
 'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not  
 Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:  
 'Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'  
 And Allan said: 'I see it is a trick  
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
 You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
 To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;  
 But go you hence, and never see me more.'

90

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
 As Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field  
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,  
 Remembering the day when first she came,  
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd.

100

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said: 'My uncle took the boy;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
He says that he will never see me more.'  
Then answer'd Mary: 'This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself;  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back.  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us.'

120

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
The door was off the latch; they peep'd, and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollow of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him; and the lad stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in; but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her;  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

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'O father!—if you will let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child; but now I come  
For Dora; take her back, she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife; but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.  
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd  
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
His father's memory; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before.'

140

150

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face

By Mary. There was silence in the room;  
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:

'I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son,  
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.  
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.  
Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.  
And all the man was broken with remorse;  
And all his love came back a hundred-fold;  
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child  
Thinking of William.

166

So those four abode  
Within one house together, and as years  
Went forward Mary took another mate;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

### AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat  
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'  
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all  
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
And half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over,—who was dead,  
 Who married, who was like to be, and how  
 The races went, and who would rent the hall;  
 Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
 This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
 The four-field system, and the price of grain;  
 And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
 And came again together on the king  
 With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud,  
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
 To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang:

'O, who would fight and march and countermarch,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
 Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

'O, who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
 I might as well have traced it in the sands;  
 The sea wastes all; but let me live my life.

50

'O, who would love? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with mine.  
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
 His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
 Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
 I set the words, and added names I knew:

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:  
 Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;  
 Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast;  
 Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip.  
 I go to-night; I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return; I would I were  
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
 Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
 The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,  
 My friend; and I, that having wherewithal.

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
 A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
 Did what I would. But ere the night we rose  
 And saunter'd home beneath a moon that, just  
 In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
 Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
 The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
 The town was hush'd beneath us; lower down  
 The bay was oily calm; the harbor-buoy,  
 Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
 With one green sparkle ever and anon  
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

80

## WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look  
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
 The whole hillside was redder than a fox!  
 Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
 The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
 No, not the County Member's with the vane.  
 Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half  
 A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's.  
 But he's abroad; the place is to be sold.

10

*John.* O, his! He was not broken.  
*James.* No, sir, he,  
 Vext with a morbid devil in his blood  
 That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face  
 From all men, and commercing with himself,  
 He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
 That keeps us all in order more or less—  
 And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.  
 But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
 As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—  
 There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up

And bristles, half has fallen and made a bridge;  
 And there he caught the younker tickling trout—  
 Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—  
*Delicto*; but his house, for so they say,  
 Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
 The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
 And rummaged like a rat; no servant stay'd.  
 The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,  
 And all his household stuff; and with his boy  
 Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
 Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!  
 You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost—  
 For they had pack'd the thing among the beds.  
 'O, well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too!—  
 Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once;  
 A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* O, yet but I remember, ten years back—  
 'T is now at least ten years—and then she was—  
 You could not light upon a sweeter thing;  
 A body slight and round, and like a pear  
 In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
 Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
 As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved  
 At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.  
 She was the daughter of a cottager,  
 Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,  
 New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd  
 To what she is; a nature never kind!  
 Like men, like manners; like breeds like, they say.  
 Kind nature is the best; those manners next  
 That fit us like a nature second-hand—  
 Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,  
 And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
 I once was near him, when his bailiff brought  
 A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince  
 As from a venomous thing; he thought himself  
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
 Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs. But sir, you know  
 That these two parties still divide the world—  
 Of those that want, and those that have; and still  
 The same old sore breaks out from age to age

With much the same result. Now I myself,  
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
 Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
 I was at school,—a college in the South.  
 There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,  
 His hens, his eggs; but there was a law for *us*;  
 We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
 With meditative grunts of much content,  
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.  
 By night we dragg'd her to the college tower  
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
 With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,  
 And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.  
 Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
 And but for daily loss of one she loved  
 As one by one we took them—but for this—  
 As never sow was higher in this world—  
 Might have been happy; but what lot is pure?  
 We took them all, till she was left alone  
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

80

90

*John.* They found you out?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?  
 His nerves were wrong. What ails us who are sound,  
 That we should mimic this raw fool the world,  
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,  
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
 To pity—more from ignorance than will.

100

But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
 That we shall miss the mail; and here it comes  
 With five at top, as quaint a four-in-hand  
 As you shall see,—three pyebalds and a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS

### OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
 My one oasis in the dust and drouth  
 Of city life! I was a sketcher then.  
 See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,  
 Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
 When men knew how to build, upon a rock



EDWIN MORRIS

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,  
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimney'd bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate—he was fatter than his cure!

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss, and fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd  
All perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion; and he answer'd me,  
And well his words became him—was he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke:

'My love for Nature is as old as I;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.  
My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and change  
With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull:

'I take it, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff  
I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too low.  
But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his;  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,

I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
 I scarce have other music—yet say on.  
 What should one give to light on such a dream?  
 I ask'd him half-sardonically.

‘Give?

Give all thou art,’ he answer’d, and a light  
 Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;  
 ‘I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
 To save her little finger from a scratch  
 No deeper than the skin; my ears could hear  
 Her lightest breath; her least remark was worth  
 The experience of the wise. I went and came;  
 Her voice fled always thro’ the summer land;  
 I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!  
 The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
 The crown of all, we met to part no more.’

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
 To take them as I did? but something jarr’d;  
 Whether he spoke too largely, that there seem’d  
 A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
 Or over-smoothness; howsoe’er it was,  
 He scarcely hit my humor, and I said:

‘Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
 Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
 As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
 Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?  
 But you can talk, yours is a kindly vein;  
 I have, I think,—Heaven knows,—as much within;  
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
 That like a purple beech among the greens  
 Looks out of place. ’T is from no want in her;  
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
 Or something of a wayward modern mind  
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.’

So spoke I, knowing not the things that were.  
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:

‘God made the woman for the use of man,  
 And for the good and increase of the world.’  
 And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused  
 About the windings of the marge to hear  
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
 And alders, garden-isles; and now we left  
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
 By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,  
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
 My suit had wither’d, nipt to death by him  
 That was a god, and is a lawyer’s clerk,

The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
 'T is true, we met; one hour I had, no more:  
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
 The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;' and this  
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
 The sweet-gale rustle round the shelving keel;  
 And out I stept, and up I crept. She moved,  
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers.  
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,  
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed  
 In some new planet. A silent cousin stole  
 Upon us and departed. 'Leave,' she cried,  
 'O, leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never: here  
 I brave the worst;' and while we stood like fools  
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
 And poodles yell'd within, and out they came,  
 Trustees and aunts and uncles. 'What, with him!  
 Go,' shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus; 'him!'  
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen, 'Him!'  
 Again with hands of wild rejection, 'Go!—  
 Girl, get you in!' She went—and in one month  
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
 And educated whisker. But for me,  
 They set an ancient creditor to work;  
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms:  
 There came a mystic token from the king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd;  
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below;  
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm;  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

110

130

Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet long ago  
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,  
 It may be, for her own dear sake, but this,—  
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me;  
 For in the dust and drouth of London life  
 She moves among my visions of the lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

140

## SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn, and sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin!

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
 This not be all in vain that thrice ten years,  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;  
 And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
 Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
 The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

10

20

O, take the meaning, Lord! I do not breathe,  
 Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin that crush'd  
 My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
 Thou knowest I bore this letter at the first,  
 For I was strong and hale of body then;  
 And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
 Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
 An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh.  
 I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf I am,  
 So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
 About the column's base, and almost blind,  
 And scarce can recognize the fields I know;  
 And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;  
 Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,  
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
 Have mercy, mercy! take away my sin!

30

## SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
 Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?  
 Who may be made a saint if I fail here?  
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
 For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
 For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here  
 To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
 Bear witness, if I could have found a way—  
 And heedfully I sifted all my thought—  
 More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
 I had not stinted practice, O my God!

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
 Not this alone I bore; but while I lived  
 In the white convent down the valley there,  
 For many weeks about my loins I wore  
 The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose,  
 And spake not of it to a single soul,  
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
 Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
 My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
 I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

60

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
 I lived up there on yonder mountain-side.  
 My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
 Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;  
 Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
 Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
 Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
 Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
 To touch my body and be heal'd, and live.  
 And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
 Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
 Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
 Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
 Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

70

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
 Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
 Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;  
 And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
 Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew  
 Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,  
 That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
 Or else I dream—and for so long a time,

If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
'Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages!' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

101

But yet  
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die.

110

O, mercy, mercy! wash away my sin!

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin.  
'T is their own doing; this is none of mine;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!  
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers;  
And I, in truth—thou wilt bear witness here—  
Have all in all endured as much, and more  
Than many just and holy men, whose names  
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

120

130

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.  
It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?  
It may be no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?  
Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,

# SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
 Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd? 140  
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
 From my long penance; let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout  
 'Saint Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
 God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved, 150  
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold a saint!'  
 And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull chrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now  
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end; 160  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
 From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again. 170  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest;  
 They flapp'd my light out as I read; I saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my book;  
 With coltlike whinny and with hoggish whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain, 180  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise;  
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,

Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
 But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
 Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without reproach; 190  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
 When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
 Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!  
 Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade, 200  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown? Come blessed brother, come!  
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long;  
 My brows are ready. What! deny it now?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!  
 'T is gone; 't is here again; the crown! the crown!  
 So now 't is fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints; I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven. 210

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
 Aid all this foolish people; let them take  
 Example, pattern; lead them to thy light. 220

### THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smok



And ah! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that which in me burn'd,  
The love that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd,

10

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarized a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under heaven  
None else could understand,  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour;  
'T were well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say, thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace;

40

'Old summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek.

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turn'd the cowls adrift.

'And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork;

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays.

60

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn;

'And leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear—and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall!—  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all;

70

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

80

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain—  
And hear me with thine ears—

That, tho' I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years,

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass;

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.'

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace,  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Summer-place!

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft has heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

100

'O, yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy;  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

110

'But as for her, she staid at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you used to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf;  
She left the new piano shut;  
She could not please herself.

120

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
 And livelier than a lark  
 She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
 Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
 And in the chase grew wild,  
 As close as might be would he cling  
 About the darling child;

'But light as any wind that blows  
 So fleetly did she stir,  
 The flower she touch'd on dipt and rose,  
 And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,  
 And sang to me the whole  
 Of those three stanzas that you made  
 About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
 She strove to span my waist.  
 Alas! I was so broad of girth,  
 I could not be embraced.

144

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
 That here beside me stands,  
 That round me, clasping each in each,  
 She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
 As woodbine's fragile hold,  
 Or when I feel about my feet  
 The berried briony fold.'

O, muffle round thy knees with fern,  
 And shadow Sumner-chace!  
 Long may thy topmost branch discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

150

But tell me, did she read the name  
 I carved with many vows  
 When last with throbbing heart I came  
 To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O, yes, she wander'd round and round  
 These knotted knees of mine,

And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

160

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain,  
But not a creature was in sight;  
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd;

170

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the spring  
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

180

'I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust;

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that which breathes within the leaf  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray and branch and stem  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

190

'She had not found me so remiss;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O, flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea!  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

200

O, flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well!  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'T is little more: the day was warm;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

210

'I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife,  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

220

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

230

'And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within

As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O, kiss him once for me!

240

'O, kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss!  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

250

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetize  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

260

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O, rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet!  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells!

270

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
 That under deeply strikes!  
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot  
 High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
 But, rolling as in sleep,  
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
 That makes thee broad and deep!

280

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
 That only by thy side  
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
 And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both  
 Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth

290

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke;  
 And more than England honors that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

300

### LOVE AND DUTY

Or love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
 Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
 Still father Truth? O, shall the braggart shout  
 For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
 Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law,  
 System, and empire? Sin itself be found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the sun?  
 And only he, this wonder. dead. become

10



Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
O, three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years,  
The sun will run his orbit, and the moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait; my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.—  
So let me think 't is well for thee and me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see! what thy low voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
And on thy bosom—deep desired relief!—  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd  
Upon my brain, my senses, and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O, this world's curse—beloved but hated—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,  
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me.  
Hard is my doom and thine; thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And all good things from evil, brought the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want that hollow'd all the heart  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears  
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times  
In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
In that brief night, the summer night, that paused  
Among her stars to hear us, stars that hung  
Love-charm'd to listen; all the wheels of Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O, then, like those who clench their nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
Like bitter accusation even to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,  
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all  
Life needs for life is possible to will?—  
Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by  
My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts  
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,  
If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,  
O, might it come like one that looks content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd  
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown  
Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:  
It was last summer on a tour in Wales.

Old James was with me; we that day had been  
Up Snowden; and I wish'd for Leonard there,  
And found him in Llanberis. Then we crost  
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-way up  
The counter side; and that same song of his  
He told me, for I banter'd him and swore  
They said he lived shut up within himself,  
A tongue-tied poet in the feverous days  
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, 'Give,  
Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd!

10

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said:  
'But I was born too late; the fair new forms,  
That float about the threshold of an age,  
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—  
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—  
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
These measured words, my work of yester-morn:

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;  
The sun flies forward to his brother sun;  
The dark earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;  
And human things returning on themselves  
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times when some new thought can bud  
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower  
Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,  
And slow and sure comes up the golden year; .

30

'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,  
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker man  
Thro' all the season of the golden year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

'Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'

50

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon  
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—  
'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,  
T is like the second world to us that live;  
'T were all as one to fix our hopes on heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full  
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis;  
Then added, all in heat

'What stuff is this!  
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—  
The more fools they,—we forward; dreamers both—  
You most, that, in an age when every hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge  
His hand into the bag; but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors.'

He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink  
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men

# U L Y S S E S

And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them all,—  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades 20  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains; but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;  
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me,—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;  
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil. 50  
 Death closes all; but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;  
 The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.  
 'T is not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
 We are not now that strength which in old days  
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

### TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
 The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.  
 Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a God!  
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
 And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,  
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
 Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
 To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift.  
 Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
 Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?  
 A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

40

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

60

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground.  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn;  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a sliver braid.

10

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see,  
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;  
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;  
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

20

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

30

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, past in music out of sight.



Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!  
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish the happy?—having known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

50

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'t is well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved  
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

76

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did she speak and move;  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?  
No—she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

'Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

80

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.  
'T is a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

90

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint.  
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's? 146

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain. 150

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing  
space;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Then that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me as when life begun;  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame, 10  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry; for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamoring, 'If we pay, we starve!'  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode  
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they starve.' 20  
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these*?—'But I would die,' said she.  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul,  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear:  
'O, ay, ay, ay, you talk!—'Alas!' she said,  
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,  
And I repeal it;' and nodding, as in scorn, 30  
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition, but that she would loose  
The people; therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing, but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon

Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook her head,  
 And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;  
 Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair  
 Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam slid  
 From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
 The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt  
 In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity.  
 The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
 And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
 The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
 Had cunning eyes to see; the barking cur  
 Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's foot-fall shot  
 Light horrors thro' her pulses; the blind walls  
 Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead  
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared; but she  
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
 Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

60

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.  
 And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
 The fatal byword of all years to come,  
 Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
 Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,  
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
 And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
 On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;  
 And she, that knew not, pass'd; and all at once,  
 With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,  
 One after one; but even then she gain'd  
 Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
 To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
 And built herself an everlasting name.

70

## THE DAY-DREAM

## PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak;  
 A pleasant hour has passed away  
 While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
 As by the lattice you reclined,  
 I went thro' many wayward moods  
 To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
 A summer crisp with shining woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last  
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
 The reflex of a legend past,  
 And loosely settled into form.  
 And would you have the thought I had,  
 And see the vision that I saw,  
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
 A crimson to the quaint macaw,  
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place  
 And order'd words asunder fly.

20

## THE SLEEPING PALACE

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
 Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,  
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his laurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs;  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily; no sound is made,  
 Not even of a gnat that sings.  
 More like a picture seemeth all  
 Than those old portraits of old kings,  
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.



## IV

Here sits the butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honor blooming fair.  
The page has caught her hand in his;  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak;  
His own are pouted to a kiss;  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams that thro' the oriel shine  
Make prisms in every carven glass  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl;  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

80

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright.  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III

She sleeps; her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps; on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest;  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

100

## THE ARRIVAL

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass 116  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead:  
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
'The many fail, the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks;  
He breaks the hedge; he enters there;  
The color flies into his cheeks;  
He trusts to light on something fair; 120  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps wind;  
The Magic Music in his heart,  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee. 130  
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

## THE REVIVAL

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 140

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd and buzz'd and clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd, 150  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!  
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago?' 160  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply,  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE

AND on her lover's arms she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old;  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

## THE DAY-DREAM

### II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss';  
'O, wake for ever, love,' she hears;  
'O love, 't was such as this and this.'  
And o'er them many a sliding star  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

180

### III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'  
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

### IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'  
'O, seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.'  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

190

### MORAL

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
O, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

200

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud or blade or bloom, may find,  
 According as his humors lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind.  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
 So 't were to cramp its use if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

210

## L'ENVOI

You shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men,  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again;  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes?  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

230

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinqueniads, would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake!

240

For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there;  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you,  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

250

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind;  
 Which, all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me,—  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

260

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find a meaning there,  
 O, whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder if he thinks me fair?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' heaven, and cannot light?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you.

270

280

## AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren;  
 Yet say the neighbors when they call  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.

O, had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion!  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber!

'T is said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation;  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

20

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches;  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little copses climbing.

30

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
 And down the middle, buzz! she went  
 With all her bees behind her;  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped.

40



Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie;  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree;  
 Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
 The vine stream'd out to follow,  
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,  
 When, ere his song was ended,  
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
 The country-side descended;  
 And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
 Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,  
 As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
 The random sunshine lighten'd?

O, Nature first was fresh to men,  
 And wanton without measure;  
 So youthful and so flexile then,  
 You moved her at your pleasure.  
 Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!  
 And make her dance attendance;  
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
 And scirrhou roots and tendons!

'T is vain! in such a brassy age  
 I could not move a thistle;  
 The very sparrows in the hedge  
 Scarce answer to my whistle;  
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
 With strumming and with scraping,  
 A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
 The passive oxen gaping.

70

But what is that I hear? a sound  
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;  
 O Lord!—'t is in my neighbor's ground,  
 The modern Muses reading.  
 They read Botanic Treatises,  
 And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
 And Methods of Transplanting Trees  
 To look as if they grew there.

80

The wither'd Misses! how they prose  
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
 And show you slips of all that grows

From England to Van Diemen.  
 They read in arbors clipt and cut,  
 And alleys, faded places,  
 By squares of tropic summer shut  
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
 Are neither green nor sappy;  
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
 The spindlings look unhappy.  
 Better to me the meanest weed  
 That blows upon its mountain,  
 The vilest herb that runs to seed  
 Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
 And years of cultivation,  
 Upon my proper patch of soil  
 To grow my own plantation.  
 I'll take the showers as they fall,  
 I will not vex my bosom;  
 Enough if at the end of all  
 A little garden blossom.

100

### SAINT AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon;  
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes;  
 May my soul follow soon!  
 The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord.  
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
 To yonder shining ground;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.

Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
The flashes come and go;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,  
And deepens on and up! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The Sabbaths of Eternity,  
One Sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel;  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

10

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favors fall!  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall;  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

20

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
 A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
 I hear a noise of hymns.  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
 I hear a voice, but none are there;  
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

30

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark.  
 I leap on board; no helmsman steers;  
 I float till all is dark.  
 A gentle sound, an awful light!  
 Three angels bear the Holy Grail;  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
 The streets are dumb with snow.  
 The tempest crackles on the leads,  
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;  
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
 And gilds the driving hail.  
 I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
 No branchy thicket shelter yields;  
 But blessed forms in whistling storms  
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.  
 A maiden knight—to me is given  
 Such hope, I know not fear;  
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
 That often meet me here.  
 I muse on joy that will not cease,  
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
 Whose odors haunt my dreams;  
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
 This mortal armor that I wear,

50

This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
'O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the Holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way;  
'And have you lost your heart?' she said;  
'And are you married yet, Edward Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me;  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will;  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold,  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!  
Cruelly came they back to-day:  
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair;  
I repent me of all I did;  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
 "Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;  
 And here the heart of Edward Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;  
 But I will love no more, no more,  
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone;  
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away.  
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair!  
 And there the heart of Edward Gray!'

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

### MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time? 'T is five o'clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port;  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind,  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,  
 To make me write my random rhymes,  
 Ere they be half-forgotten;  
 Nor add and alter, many times,  
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favor'd lips of mine;  
 Until the charm have power to make  
 New life-blood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble;  
 And that child's heart within the man's  
 Begins to move and tremble.

30

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
 By many pleasant ways,  
 Against its fountain upward runs  
 The current of my days.  
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;  
 The gaslight wavers dimmer;  
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
 My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth and wit and sense,  
 Unboding critic-pen,  
 Or that eternal want of pence  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them—  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them.

Ah! yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
 There must be stormy weather;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
 If old things, there are new;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,  
 With fair horizons bound;  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out a perfect round.

High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And set in heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory. 70

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
The pint you brought me was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place?  
Or do my peptics differ? 80

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,  
Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay,  
Where long and largely we carouse  
As who shall say me nay?  
Each month, a birthday coming on,  
We drink, defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
Had relish fiery-new,  
Or elbow-deep in sawdust slept,  
As old as Waterloo, 100  
Or, stow'd when classic Canning died,  
In musty bins and chambers,  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!  
She answer'd to my call;  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all;  
She lit the spark within my throat,  
To make my blood run quicker, 110



Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally;  
I think he came, like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

124

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cramm'd a plumper crop,  
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
Crow'd lustier late and early,  
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle-bodied boy  
That knuckled at the taw.  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,  
Flew over roof and casement;  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

130

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire,  
Came crowing over Thames.  
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

140

But whither would my fancy go?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks!  
'T is but a steward of the can,  
One shade more plump than common;  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down  
 Into the common day?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown  
 Which I shall have to pay?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
 And thrumming on the table;

169

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
 I take myself to task,  
 Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask;  
 For I had hope, by something rare,  
 To prove myself a poet,  
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
 Till they be gather'd up;  
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
 Will haunt the vacant cup;  
 And others' follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches;  
 And most, of sterling worth, is what  
 Our own experience preaches.

170

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone;  
 'T is gone, and let it go.  
 'T is gone: a thousand such have slipt  
 Away from my embraces,  
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

180

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went  
 Long since, and came no more;  
 With peals of genial clamor sent  
 From many a tavern-door,  
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
 From misty men of letters;  
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits,—  
 Thine elders and thy betters;

190

Hours when the Poet's words and looks  
 Had yet their native glow,  
 Nor yet the fear of little books  
 Had made him talk for show;

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches,  
 Ere days that deal in ana-swarm'd  
 His literary leeches. 200

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth!  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
 At half thy real worth?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass;  
 With time I will not quarrel;  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort, 210  
 I too must part; I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;  
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots;  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots; 220  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit, 230  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes;  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,

Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
Shall call thee from the boxes.

240

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
To pace the gritted floor,  
And, laying down an unctuous lease  
Of life, shalt earn no more,  
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
Shall show thee past to heaven,  
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
A pint-pot neatly graven.

### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;  
Lovers long-betroth'd were they;  
They two will wed the morrow morn—  
God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'  
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare;  
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O, God be thank'd,' said Alice the nurse,  
'That all comes round so just and fair!  
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,'  
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'  
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
'I speak the truth: you are my child.'

'The old earl's daughter died at my breast;  
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!

I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead.'  
'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due.'

30

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
'But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a begger born,' she said,  
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
She said, 'Not so; but I will know  
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse;  
'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee!'  
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare;  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:  
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!  
 Why come you drest like a village maid,  
 That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are;  
 I am a beggar born,' she said,  
 'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'For I am yours in word and in deed.  
 Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O, and proudly stood she up!  
 Her heart within her did not fail;  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

80

He laugh'd a laugh of mercy scorn;  
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood;  
 'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the next in blood,—

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

## THE CAPTAIN

### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

He that only rules by terror  
 Doeth grievous wrong.  
 Deep as hell I count his error.  
 Let him hear my song.  
 Brave the Captain was; the seamen  
 Made a gallant crew,  
 Gallant sons of English freemen,  
 Sailors bold and true.  
 But they hated his oppression;  
 Stern he was and rash,  
 So for every light transgression  
 Doom'd them to the lash.  
 Day by day more harsh and cruel

## THE CAPTAIN

Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbor-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech;  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
'Chase,' he said; the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow;  
Stately, lightly, went she norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired;  
Mute with folded arms they waited—  
Not a gun was fired.  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken;  
Every mother's son—  
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame.  
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Pale he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
Years have wander'd by;  
Side by side beneath the water  
Crew and Captain lie;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering,  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

### THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
    'If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
    And I think thou lov'st me well.'  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
    'There is none I love like thee.'  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
    And a village maiden she.  
He to lips that fondly falter  
    Presses his without reproof,  
Leads her to the village altar,  
    And they leave her father's roof.  
'I can make no marriage present;  
    Little can I give my wife.  
Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
    And I love thee more than life.'  
They by parks and lodges going  
    See the lordly castles stand;  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
    Made a murmur in the land.  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
    Says to her that loves him well,  
'Let us see these handsome houses  
    Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
So she goes by him attended,  
    Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
    Lay betwixt his home and hers;  
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
    Parks and order'd gardens great,  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
    Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer;

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30



## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days.  
O, but she will love him truly!  
He shall have a cheerful home;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come.  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,  
And beneath the gate she turns,  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before.  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door;  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call,  
While he treads with footstep firmer,  
Leading on from hall to hall.  
And, while now she wonders blindly,  
Nor the meaning can divine,  
Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
'All of this is mine and thine.'  
Here he lives in state and bounty,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free;  
Not a lord in all the county  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the color flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin;  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.  
Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove;  
But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Tho' at times her spirit sank,  
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
To all duties of her rank;  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honor  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,

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70

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And she murmur'd, 'O, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter  
 Which did win my heart from me!  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side;  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed.'  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in  
 That her spirit might have rest.

100

## THE VOYAGE

WE left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the south.  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore!  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

## II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail;  
 The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind; so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the sun!

10

## III

How oft we saw the sun retire,  
And burn the threshold of the night,  
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!  
How oft the purple-skirted robe  
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
As thro' the slumber of the globe  
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

## IV

New stars all night above the brim  
Of waters lighten'd into view;  
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
Of her own halo's dusky shield.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
High towns on hills were dimly seen;  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
And dewy Northern meadows green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep  
Across the boundless east we drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
Fantastic plume or sable pine;  
By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;

At times a carven craft would shoot  
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
 Down the waste waters day and night,  
 And still we follow'd where she led,  
 In hope to gain upon her flight.  
 Her face was evermore unseen,  
 And fixt upon the far sea-line;  
 But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,  
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

60

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
 Like Fancy made of golden air,  
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
 Now high on waves that idly burst  
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,  
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

70

And only one among us—him  
 We pleased not—he was seldom pleased;  
 He saw not far, his eyes were dim,  
 But ours he swore were all diseased.  
 'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
 'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;  
 We loved the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn.  
 For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
 But whence were those that drove the sail  
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
 And to and thro' the counter gale?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow'd where she led;  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead,  
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
We follow that which flies before;  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.

90

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

## A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven again  
The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song;  
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong;  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong;

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring;  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set;  
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains  
Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid.  
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

#### A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver;  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet, then a river;  
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

## THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid;  
She was more fair than words can say;  
Barefooted came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way;  
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen;  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been.  
Cophetua sware a royal oath:  
'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

## THE EAGLE

## FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

## 'MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH'

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow;  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O happy planet, eastward go,  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

### 'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'

Come not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
I care no longer, being all unblest:  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie;  
Go by, go by.

## THE LETTERS

Still on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow;  
'Cold altar, heaven and earth shall meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

## II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,  
And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
We met, but only met to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colors I approved.



## THE LETTERS

### III

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me;  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please.  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

### IV

She told me all her friends had said;  
I raged against the public liar;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
'No more of love, your sex is known;  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of hell,—  
And women's slander is the worst,—  
And you, whom once I loved so well,  
Thro' you my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

### VI

We parted; sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapor-braided blue;  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;  
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## THE VISION OF SIN

I HAD a vision when the night was late;  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise.  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse, 10  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

## II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,  
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
 Woven in circles. They that heard it sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied; 20  
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and died,  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;  
 Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,  
 As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,  
 The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and palpitated;  
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles, 30  
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
 Flung the torrent rainbow round.  
 Then they started from their places,  
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
 Half-invisible to the view,  
 Wheeling with precipitate paces  
 To the melody, till they flew,  
 Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,  
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,

Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
 Dash'd together in blinding dew;  
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
 The nerve-dissolving melody  
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,  
 That girt the region with high cliff and lawn.  
 I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,  
 Unheeded; and detaching, fold by fold,  
 From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
 A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
 Came floating on for many a month and year,  
 Unheeded; and I thought I would have spoken,  
 And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late,  
 But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,  
 When that cold vapor touch'd the palace-gate,  
 And link'd again. I saw within my head  
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,  
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

60

## IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!  
 Here is custom come your way;  
 Take my brute, and lead him in,  
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!  
 See that sheets are on my bed.  
 What! the flower of life is past;  
 It is long before you wed.

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
 At the Dragon on the heath!  
 Let us have a quiet hour,  
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;  
 Bring me spices, bring me wine;  
 I remember, when I think,  
 That my youth was half divine.

‘Wine is good for shrivell’d lips,  
 When a blanket wraps the day,  
 When the rotten woodland drips,  
 And the leaf is stamp’d in clay.

80

‘Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;  
 What care I for any name?  
 What for order or degree?

‘Let me screw thee up a peg;  
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine;  
 Callest thou that thing a leg?  
 Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

‘Thou shalt not be saved by works,  
 Thou hast been a sinner too;  
 Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,  
 Empty scarecrows, I and you!

‘Fill the cup and fill the can,  
 Have a rouse before the morn;  
 Every moment dies a man,  
 Every moment one is born.

‘We are men of ruin’d blood;  
 Therefore comes it we are wise.  
 Fish are we that love the mud,  
 Rising to no fancy-flies.

100

‘Name and fame! to fly sublime  
 Thro’ the courts, the camps, the schools  
 Is to be the ball of Time,  
 Bandied by the hands of fools.

‘Friendship!—to be two in one—  
 Let the canting liar pack!  
 Well I know, when I am gone,  
 How she mouths behind my back.

110

‘Virtue!—to be good and just—  
 Every heart, when sifted well,  
 Is a clot of warmer dust,  
 Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

‘O, we two as well can look  
 Whited thought and cleanly life

As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup and fill the can,  
Have a rouse before the morn:  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave;  
They are fill'd with idle spleen,  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power,  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

139

'Fill the can and fill the cup;  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applause breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;  
She is of an ancient house,  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

140

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool,—  
Visions of a perfect State;  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

150

'Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,  
Set thy hoary fancies free;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

160

'Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance—  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can and fill the cup;  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads—  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex  
From the fashion of your bones.

180

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip;  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed;  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath!

Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near—  
What! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

209

'Fill the cup and fill the can;  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
Dregs of life, and lees of man;  
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

The voice grew faint; there came a further change;  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range.  
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.  
Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'  
Another said: 'The crime of sense became  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'  
And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his power;  
A little grain of conscience made him sour.'  
At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand;  
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

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# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

## TO .

### AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

‘Cursed be he that moves my bones.’

*Shakespeare's Epitaph*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown;  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

‘Proclaim the faults he would not show;  
Break lock and seal, betray the trust;  
Keep nothing sacred, 't is but just  
The many-headed beast should know.’

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing  
A song that pleased us from its worth;  
No public life was his on earth,  
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;  
His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,



Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd!

## TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneïan pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown  
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks  
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O, well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And the stately ships go on  
    To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
    And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
    At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
    Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
    He pass'd by the town and out of the street;  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
    And waves of shadow went over the wheat;  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
    And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
    And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
    The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
    And stared, with his foot on the prey;  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,  
    But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
    When the years have died away.'

# THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

## PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people; thither flock'd at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half  
The neighboring borough with their Institute,  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,—the son  
A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
Five others; we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,  
Greek, set with busts. From vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm; and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at Agincourt;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon.  
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him,'—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died;  
And mixt with these a lady, one that arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'O miracle of women,' said the book,  
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—  
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,  
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,  
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,  
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,  
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook;  
O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;  
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,  
'To the Abbey; there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And Sister Lilia with the rest.' We went—  
I kept the book and had my finger in it—  
Down thro' the park. Strange was the sight to me;  
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads;  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing, now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp; and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon; Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields; and here were telescopes  
For azure views; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter; round the lake  
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies; perch'd about the knolls  
A dozen angry models jetted steam;  
A petty railway ran; a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past;  
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with science; otherwhere  
Pure sport; a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd

And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about  
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids  
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light  
 And shadow, while the twangling violin  
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead  
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;  
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,  
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave  
 The park, the crowd, the house; but all within  
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn.  
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
 From neighbor seats; and there was Ralph himself,  
 A broken statue propt against the wall,  
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
 Half child, half woman as she was, had wound  
 A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
 Glow like a sunbeam. Near his tomb a feast  
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,  
 And there we join'd them; then the maiden aunt  
 Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd  
 An universal culture for the crowd,  
 And all things great. But we, unworthier, told  
 Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,  
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,  
 And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one  
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,  
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;  
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

110

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
 The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought  
 My book to mind, and opening this I read  
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
 With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her  
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
 And much I praised her nobleness, and 'Where,'  
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head—she lay  
 Beside him—'lives there such a woman now?'

120

Quick answer'd Lilia: 'There are thousands now  
 Such women, but convention beats them down;  
 It is but bringing up; no more than that.  
 You men have done it—how I hate you all! 130  
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were  
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
 That love to keep us children! O, I wish  
 That I were some great princess, I would build  
 Far off from men a college like a man's,  
 And I would teach them all that men are taught;  
 We are twice as quick!' And here she shook aside  
 The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling: 'Pretty were the sight  
 If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt 140  
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
 I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,  
 If there were many Liliass in the brood,  
 However deep you might embower the nest,  
 Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sword  
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:  
 'That's your light way; but I would make it death 150  
 For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;  
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
 And sweet as English air could make her, she!  
 But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
 And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'  
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,  
 All else was well, for she-society.  
 They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd  
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics; 160  
 They lost their weeks; they vex'd the souls of deans;  
 They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,  
 And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection.

'True,' she said,  
 'We doubt not that. O, yes, you miss'd us much!  
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

## THE PRINCESS

She held it out; and as a parrot turns  
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
 And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' he said.  
 'Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:  
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;  
 And there we took one tutor as to read:  
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square  
 Were out of season; never man, I think,  
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he;  
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail; often, like as many girls—  
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Liliass—play'd  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
 And *what's my thought* and *when and where and how*,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas.'

180

She remember'd that;  
 A pleasant game, she thought. She liked it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,  
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

190

A half-disdain  
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;  
 And Walter nodded at me: '*He* began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn; and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?  
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms;  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,  
 The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'  
 Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden aunt.  
 'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker  
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden aunt—

210

A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face  
 With color—turn'd to me with 'As you will;  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamor'd he,  
 'And make her some great princess, six feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
 The prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the prince,' 220  
 I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!  
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—  
 Heroic seems our princess as required—  
 But something made to suit with time and place,  
 A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
 A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments  
 For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all—  
 This *were* a medley! we should have him back 230  
 Who told the "Winter's Tale" to do it for us.  
 No matter; we will say whatever comes.  
 And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
 From time to time, some ballad or a song  
 To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,  
 And the rest follow'd; and the women sang  
 Between the rougher voices of the men,  
 Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:  
 And here I give the story and the songs.

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
 Of temper amorous as the first of May,  
 With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
 For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.  
 Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt  
 Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
 Dying, that none of all our blood should know  
 The shadow from the substance, and that one 10  
 Should come to fight with shadows and to fall;  
 For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
 And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,  
 An old and strange affection of the house.  
 Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what!



## THE PRINCESS

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'  
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers.  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness;  
But my good father thought a king a king.  
He cared not for the affection of the house;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
Reach'd out and pick'd offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

20

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd  
To one, a neighboring Princess. She to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old; and still from time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her. These brought back  
A present, a great labor of the loom;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind.  
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;  
He said there was a compact; that was true;  
But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:  
The first, a gentleman of broken means—  
His father's fault—but given to starts and bursts  
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,

Inflamed with wrath. He started on his feet,  
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent  
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof  
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware  
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
 And bring her in a whirlwind; then he chew'd  
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,  
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me go.  
 It cannot be but some gross error lies  
 In this report, this answer of a king  
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable;  
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
 May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said:  
 'I have a sister at the foreign court,  
 Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,  
 Who wedded with a nobleman from thence.  
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
 The lady of three castles in that land;  
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'  
 And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with you too.'  
 Then laughing, 'What if these weird seizures come  
 Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
 To point you out the shadow from the truth!  
 Take me; I'll serve you better in a strait;  
 I grate on rusty hinges here.' But 'No!  
 Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not; we ourself  
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
 In iron gauntlets; break the council up.'

70

80

But when the council broke, I rose and past  
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town;  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees.  
 What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?  
 Proud look'd the lips; but while I meditated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
 Of the wild woods together, and a Voice  
 Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread

100

## THE PRINCESS

To hear my father's clamor at our backs  
 With 'Ho!' from some bay-window shake the night;  
 But all was quiet. From the bastion'd walls  
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,  
 And flying reach'd the frontier; then we crost  
 To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,  
 And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
 We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,  
 And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,  
 But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind  
 On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;  
 A little dry old man, without a star,  
 Not like a king. Three days he feasted us  
 And on the fourth I spake of why we came  
 And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,' he said,  
 Airing a snowy hand and signet gem, 120  
 'All honor. We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth. There did a compact pass  
 Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—  
 I think the year in which our olives fail'd.  
 I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,  
 With my full heart; but there were widows here,  
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;  
 They fed her theories, in and out of place  
 Maintaining that with equal husbandry 130  
 The woman were an equal to the man.  
 They harp'd on this; with this our banquets rang;  
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;  
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot  
 To hear them. Knowledge, so my daughter held,  
 Was all in all; they had but been, she thought,  
 As children; they must lose the child, assume  
 The woman. Then, sir, awful odes she wrote,  
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
 But all she is and does is awful; odes 140  
 About this losing of the child; and rhymes  
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
 Beyond all reason. These the women sang;  
 And they that know such things—I sought but peace;  
 No critic I—would call them masterpieces.  
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,  
 A certain summer-palace which I have  
 Hard by your father's frontier. I said no,  
 Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,  
 All wild to found an University  
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more 150

We know not,—only this: they see no men,  
 Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins  
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her  
 As on a kind of paragon; and I—  
 Pardon me saying it—were much loth to breed  
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine; but since—  
 And I confess with right—you think me bound  
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her;  
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
 Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;  
 And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
 Our formal compact, yet, not less—all frets  
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride—  
 Went forth again with both my friends. We rode  
 Many a long league back to the North. At last  
 From hills that look'd across a land of hope  
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
 Close at the boundary of the liberties;  
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

160

170

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
 As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd,  
 Averring it was clear against all rules  
 For any man to go; but as his brain  
 Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,  
 'Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?  
 The king would bear him out;' and at the last—  
 The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
 'No doubt that we might make it worth his while.  
 She once had past that way; he heard her speak;  
 She scared him; life! he never saw the like;  
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave!  
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there;  
 He always made a point to post with mares;  
 His daughter and his housemaid were the boys;  
 The land, he understood, for miles about  
 Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,  
 And all the dogs'—

180

190

But while he jested thus,  
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,  
 Remembering how we three presented Maid,  
 Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
 In masque or pageant at my father's court.

We sent mine host to purchase female gear;  
 He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
 The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
 To lace us up, till each in maiden plumes  
 We rustled; him we gave a costly bribe  
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
 And boldly ventured on the liberties.

200

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
 And rode till midnight, when the college lights  
 Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
 And linden alley; then we past an arch,  
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
 From four wing'd horses dark against the stars,  
 And some inscription ran along the front,  
 But deep in shadow. Further on we gain'd  
 A little street half garden and half house,  
 But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
 Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
 On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
 Of fountains spouted up and showering down  
 In meshes of the jasmire and the rose;  
 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
 Rapt in her song and careless of the snare.

210

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth  
 With constellation and with continent,  
 Above an entry. Riding in, we call'd;  
 A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench  
 Came running at the call, and help'd us down.  
 Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,  
 Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave  
 Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
 In laurel. Here we ask'd of that and this,  
 And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,' she said,  
 'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was prettiest,  
 Best natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers are we,'  
 One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote  
 In such a hand as when a field of corn  
 Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
 Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
 As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd;  
 The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,

And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes.  
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
 To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight swell  
 On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

246

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
 We fell out, my wife and I,  
 O, we fell out, I know not why,  
 And kiss'd again with tears.  
 And blessings on the falling out  
 That all the more endears,  
 When we fall out with those we love  
 And kiss again with tears!  
 For when we came where lies the child  
 We lost in other years,  
 There above the little grave,  
 O, there above the little grave,  
 We kiss'd again with tears.

254

## II

At break of day the College Portress came;  
 She brought us academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
 And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,  
 And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
 She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
 The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,  
 I first, and following thro' the porch that sang  
 All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.  
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,  
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst,  
 And here and there on lattice edges lay  
 Or book or lute; but hastily we past,  
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

10

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
 With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,  
 All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant  
 Of some clear planet close upon the sun,  
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,  
 And so much grace and power, breathing down  
 From over her arch'd brows, with every turn  
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,  
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

‘We give you welcome; not without redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger; aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?’  
‘We of the court,’ said Cyril. ‘From the court,’  
She answer’d, ‘then ye know the Prince?’ and he:  
‘The climax of his age! as tho’ there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
He worships your ideal.’ She replied:  
‘We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;  
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,  
We dream not of him; when we set our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with ourself  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks which make us toys of men, that so  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.’

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,  
Perused the matting; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:  
Not for three years to correspond with home;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties;  
Not for three years to speak with any men;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter’d on the boards. And ‘Now,’ she cried,  
‘Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!  
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro’ the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O, lift your natures up;

Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. Girls,  
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd!  
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
 And slander, die. Better not be at all  
 Than not be noble. Leave us; you may go.  
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
 The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
 For they press in from all the provinces,  
 And fill the hive.'

80

She spoke, and bowing waved  
 Dismissal; back again we crost the court  
 To Lady Psyche's. As we enter'd in,  
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves  
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
 A patient range of pupils; she herself  
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,  
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
 Aglaïa slept. We sat; the lady glanced;  
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
 That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge,  
 'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'  
 Said Cyril. 'O, hush, hush!' and she began.

100

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
 Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
 The planets; then the monster, then the man;  
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate,  
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
 Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took  
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 As emblematic of a nobler age;  
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
 How far from just; till warming with her theme  
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to chivalry,

110



When some respect, however slight, was paid  
To woman, superstition all awry.

12c

However, then commenced the dawn; a beam  
Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
None lordier than themselves but that which made  
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.  
Here might they learn whatever men were taught.

130

Let them not fear, some said their heads were less;  
Some men's were small, not they the least of men;  
For often fineness compensated size.  
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew  
With using: thence the man's, if more was more.  
He took advantage of his strength to be  
First in the field; some ages had been lost;  
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names  
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth  
The highest is the measure of the man,  
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,  
But Homer, Plato, Verulam, even so  
With woman; and in arts of government  
Elizabeth and others, arts of war  
The peasant Joan and others, arts of grace  
Sappho and others vied with any man;  
And, last not least, she who had left her place,  
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow  
To use and power on this oasis, lapt  
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight  
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
Dilating on the future: 'everywhere  
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,  
Two in the tangled business of the world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life,  
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss  
Of science and the secrets of the mind;  
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more;  
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth  
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,  
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

160

She ended here, and beckon'd us; the rest  
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried, 170  
 'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,' she said,  
 'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?  
 Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'  
 'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'  
 'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could think 180  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men?'  
 'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.  
 'You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess!' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning; bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones: 190  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind.'*  
 'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:  
 'Albeit so mask'd, madam, I love the truth;  
 Receive it, and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida. Here, for here she was,  
 And thus—what other way was left?—I came.'  
 'O sir, O Prince, I have no country, none; 200  
 If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, sir? love-whispers may not breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live? The thunderbolt  
 Hangs silent; but prepare. I speak, it falls.'  
 'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit; if more there be, 210  
 If more and acted on, what follows? war;

Your own work marr'd; for this your Academe,  
 Whichever side be victor, in the halloo  
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
 With all fair theories only made to gild  
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess judge  
 Of that,' she said: 'farewell, sir—and to you.  
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,  
 'The fifth in line from that old Florian, 226  
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall—  
 The gaunt old baron with his beetle brow  
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights—  
 As he bestrode my grandsire, when he fell,  
 And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,  
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
 But branches current yet in kindred veins.'  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she  
 With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly, 230  
 And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you  
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
 My sickness down to happy dreams? are you  
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
 You were that Psyche, but what are you now?'  
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for whom  
 I would be that forever which I seem,  
 Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
 And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,  
 'That on her bridal morn before she past  
 From all her old companions, when the king  
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;  
 That were there any of our people there  
 In want or peril, there was one to hear  
 And help them? look! for such are these and I.'  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to whom,  
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap  
 And sobb'd and you sobb'd with it, and the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.  
 O, by the bright head of my little niece,

You were that Psyche, and what are you now?'  
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,  
 'The mother of the sweetest little maid  
 That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it!'

She answer'd, 'peace! and why should I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great; he for the common weal,  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,  
 Slew both his sons; and I, shall I, on whom  
 The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
 O, hard when love and duty clash! I fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—  
 Hear my conditions: promise—otherwise  
 You perish—as you came, to slip away  
 To-day, to-morrow, soon. It shall be said,  
 These women were too barbarous, would not learn;  
 They fled, who might have shamed us. Promise, all.'

270

What could we else, we promised each; and she,  
 Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced  
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian; holding out her lily arms  
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:  
 'I knew you at the first; tho' you have grown  
 You scarce have alter'd. I am sad and glad  
 To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,  
 My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.  
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
 Our mother, is she well?'

280

With that she kiss'd  
 His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
 About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up  
 From out a common vein of memory  
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,  
 And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
 Began to glisten and to fall; and while  
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,  
 'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'  
 Back started she, and turning round we saw  
 The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,  
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,

290

That clad her like an April daffodilly—  
 Her mother's color—with her lips apart,  
 And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
 As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.  
 Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—you!  
 You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O, pardon me!  
 I heard, I could not help it, did not wish;  
 But, dearest lady, pray you fear me not,  
 Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,  
 To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'  
 'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two  
 Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine;  
 But yet your mother's jealous temperament—  
 Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove  
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not,'  
 Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not tell,  
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
 No, not to answer, madam, all those hard things  
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'  
 'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may lead  
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'  
 Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar; nor should you—  
 Tho', madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask—  
 Less welcome find among us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more.' He said not what,  
 But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'go; we have been too long  
 Together; keep your hoods about the face;  
 They do so that affect abstraction here.  
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold  
 Your promise. All, I trust, may yet be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,  
 And held her round the knees against his waist,  
 And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child  
 Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;  
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled

For half the day thro' stately theatres

Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
 The grave professor. On the lecture slate  
 The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration; follow'd then  
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thunderous epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long  
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
 Sparkle forever. Then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame, the rock,  
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
 And whatsoever can be taught and known;  
 Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
 And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,  
 We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:  
 'Why, sirs, they do all this as well as we.'  
 'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril, 'very well;  
 But when did woman ever yet invent?'  
 'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian; 'have you learnt  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?'  
 'O, trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel in it!  
 Should I not call her wise who made me wise?  
 And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash  
 Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
 And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O,  
 With me, sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
 The head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;  
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher. And now  
 What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
 The substance or the shadow? will it hold?  
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
 No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
 Flatter myself that always everywhere  
 I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
 Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she  
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?  
 For dear are those three castles to my wants,

350

380

390

And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
 And two dear things are one of double worth;  
 And much I might have said, but that my zone  
 Unmann'd me. Then the Doctors! O, to hear  
 The Doctors! O, to watch the thirsty plants  
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my mane; but thou,  
 Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry!  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;  
 Abate the stride which speaks of man, and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out of time  
 Will wonder why they came. But hark the bell  
 For dinner, let us go!'

410

And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair  
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors; they, the while,  
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro.  
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms  
 Of art and science; Lady Blanche alone  
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
 With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.

420

At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens. There  
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
 In this hand held a volume as to read,  
 And smoothed a petted peacock down with that.  
 Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
 Or under arches of the marble bridge  
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat; some hid and sought  
 In the orange thickets; others tost a ball  
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
 With laughter; others lay about the lawns,  
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May  
 Was passing—what was learning unto them?  
 They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;

430

440

Men hated learned women. But we three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
 That harm'd not. Then day droopt; the chapel bells  
 Call'd us; we left the walks; we mixt with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall to wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from heaven  
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon;  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

### III

Morn in the white wake of the morning star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
 We rose, and each by other drest with care  
 Descended to the court that lay three parts  
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd  
 Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
 And 'Fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may!  
 My mother knows.' And when I ask'd her 'how,'  
 'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet not mine;  
 Yet mine in part. O, hear me, pardon me!



My mother, 't is her wont from night to night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;  
 And so it was agreed when first they came; 20  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
 And she the left, or not or seldom used;  
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass you,  
*Her* countrywomen! she did not envy her.  
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?  
 Girls?—more like men!" and at these words the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;  
 And O, sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye 30  
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:  
 "O marvellously modest maiden, you!  
 Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men  
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus  
 For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed  
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
 What looks so little graceful: "men"—for still  
 My mother went revolving on the word—  
 "And so they are,—very like men indeed—  
 And with that woman closeted for hours!" 4  
 Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
 "Why—these—*are*—men;" I shudder'd; "and you know it."  
 "O, ask me nothing," I said. "And she knows too,  
 And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd  
 The truth at once, but with no word from me;  
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
 The Princess. Lady Psyche will be crush'd;  
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly;  
 But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'  
 Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again; than wear  
 Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more in heaven,'  
 He added, 'lest some classic angel speak  
 In scorn of us, "They mounted, Ganymedes,  
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."  
 But I will melt this marble into wax  
 To yield us farther furlough;' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
 He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,  
 'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'

'O, long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two  
 Division smoulders hidden; 't is my mother,  
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her.  
 I never knew my father, but she says—  
 God help her!—she was wedded to a fool;  
 And still she rail'd against the state of things.  
 She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
 And from the Queen's decease she brought her up. 70  
 But when your sister came she won the heart  
 Of Ida; they were still together, grew—  
 For so they said themselves—inoscultated;  
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note;  
 One mind in all things. Yet my mother still  
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
 And angled with them for her pupil's love;  
 She calls her plagiarist, I know not what.  
 But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and light,  
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled. 80

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her:  
 'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
 If I could love, why this were she. How pretty  
 Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,  
 As if to close with Cyril's random wish!  
 Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,  
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,  
 The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
 An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere. 90  
 My princess, O my princess! true she errs,  
 But in her own grand way; being herself  
 Three times more noble than three score of men,  
 She sees herself in every woman else,  
 And so she wears her error like a crown  
 To blind the truth and me. For her, and her,  
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
 The nectar; but—ah, she—whene'er she moves  
 The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks  
 A Memnon smitten with the morning sun.' 100

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd  
 The terrace ranged along the northern front,  
 And leaning there on those balusters, high  
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale  
 That blown about the foliage underneath,  
 And sated with the innumerable rose,

Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
 Cyril, and yawning, 'O hard task,' he cried:  
 'No fighting shadows here. I forced a way  
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd. 110  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there  
 At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming storm.  
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,  
 As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd  
 Concealment. She demanded who we were,  
 And why we came? I fabled nothing fair, 124  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.  
 Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye,  
 But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
 And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves  
 With open eyes, and we must take the chance.  
 But such extremes, I told her, well might harm  
 The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she said,  
 "So puddled as it is with favoritism." 130  
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall  
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew;  
 Her answer was, "Leave me to deal with that."  
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
 I grew discouraged, sir; but since I knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission in a thousand years,  
 I recommenced: "Decide not ere you pause. 140  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.  
 I offer boldly; we will seat you highest.  
 Wink at our advent; help my prince to gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
 Some palace in our land, where you shall reign  
 The head and heart of all our fair she-world,  
 And your great name flow on with broadening time  
 For ever." Well, she balanced this a little,  
 And told me she would answer us to-day,  
 Meantime be mute; thus much, nor more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.  
 'That afternoon the Princess rode to take

The dip of certain strata to the north.  
 Would we go with her? we should find the land  
 Worth seeing, and the river made a fall  
 Out yonder;' then she pointed on to where  
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all 180  
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
 Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood  
 Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
 Of those tame leopards. Kitten-like he roll'd  
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;  
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came  
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house.  
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy, 170  
 Her college and her maidens empty masks,  
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
 For all things were and were not. Yet I felt  
 My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;  
 Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
 Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes  
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook  
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
 Went forth in long retinue following up  
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills. 180

I rode beside her and to me she said:  
 'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not  
 Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;  
 Unwillingly we spake.' 'No—not to her,'  
 I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake  
 Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say.'  
 'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassadors  
 From him to me? we give you, being strange,  
 A license; speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have wish'd— 190  
 'Our king expects—was there no precontract?  
 There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
 All he prefigured, and he could not see  
 The bird of passage flying south but long'd  
 To follow. Surely, if your Highness keep  
 Your purport, you will shock him even to death,  
 Or baser courses, children of despair.'

‘Poor boy,’ she said, can he not read—no books?  
 Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that  
 Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
 Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
 As girls were once, as we ourself have been.  
 We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them.  
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
 Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,  
 To lift the woman’s fallen divinity  
 Upon an even pedestal with man.’

200

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,  
 ‘And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
 At no man’s beck, but know ourself and thee,  
 O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon’d out  
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
 To brawl at Sushan underneath the palms.’

‘Alas, your Highness breathes full East,’ I said,  
 ‘On that which leans to you! I know the Prince,  
 I prize his truth. And then how vast a work  
 To assail this gray preëminence of man!  
 You grant me license; might I use it? think;  
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;  
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
 And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains  
 May only make that footprint upon sand  
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
 Resmooth to nothing. Might I dread that you,  
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss  
 Meanwhile what every woman counts her due,  
 Love, children, happiness?’

220

And she exclaim’d,  
 ‘Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!  
 What! tho’ your Prince’s love were like a god’s,  
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
 You are bold indeed; we are not talk’d to thus.  
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:  
 But children die; and let me tell you, girl,  
 Howe’er you babble, great deeds cannot die;  
 They with the sun and moon renew their light  
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
 O—children—there is nothing upon earth

230

240

More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err. Nor would we work for fame;  
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
 Who learns the one pou sto whence after-hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
 But little; wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been, 250  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living each a thousand years,  
 That we might see our own work out, and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
 If that strange poet-princess with her grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won.  
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;  
 We are used to that; for women, up till this 260  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
 If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
 O, if our end were less achievable  
 By slow approaches than by single act  
 Of immolation, any phase of death,  
 We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,  
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it, 270  
 To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;  
 And up we came to where the river sloped  
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,  
 And danced the color, and, below, stuck out  
 The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd  
 Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,  
 'As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
 That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I ask'd, 280  
 'Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,  
 That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you love  
 The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,  
 The golden brooch. Beneath an emerald plane  
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
 Of hemlock—our device, wrought to the life—  
 She rant upon her subject, he on her;

For there are schools for all.' 'And yet,' I said,  
 'Methinks I have not found among them all  
 One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'  
 She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not; in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits. Yet we know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs.  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
 Which touches on the workman and his work.  
 Let there be light and there was light; 't is so,  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is,  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light; but we that are not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession. Thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
 The woman to the fuller day.'

300

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. 'O, how sweet,' I said,—  
 For I was half-oblivious of my mask,—  
 'To linger here with one that loved us!' 'Yea,'  
 She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
 Where paced the demigods of old, and saw  
 The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers  
 Built to the Sun.' Then, turning to her maids,  
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;  
 Lay out the viands.' At the word, they raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,

32

330

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And all the men mourn'd at his side. But we  
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept  
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag. And then we turn'd, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun  
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

340

The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story;  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer; farther going!  
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

### IV

'There sinks the nebulous star we call the sun,  
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'  
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and we  
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,  
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below  
No bigger than a glowworm shone the tent  
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,  
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,  
And blissful palpitations in the blood  
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

10

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank



Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst  
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us; lightlier move  
The minutes fledged with music;' and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp and sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange, as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!'

She ended with such passion that the tear  
She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom; but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess: 'If indeed there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
And so pace by. But thine are fancies hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
While down the streams that float us each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
Becomes a cloud; for all things serve their time  
Toward that great year of equal might and rights.  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
Found golden. Let the past be past, let be  
Their cancell'd Babels; tho' the rough kex break  
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat  
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split

Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
 Above the unrisen morrow.' Then to me,  
 'Know you no song of your own land,' she said,  
 'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
 But deals with the other distance and the hues  
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine?'

Then I remember'd one myself had made,  
 What time I watch'd the swallow winging south  
 From mine own land, part made long since, and part  
 Now while I sang, and maiden-like as far  
 As I could ape their treble did I sing.

70

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,  
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
 And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O, were I thou that she might take me in,  
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
 Delaying as the tender ash delays  
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;  
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
 But in the North long since my nest is made.

80

'O, tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,  
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,  
 And knew not what they meant; for still my voice  
 Rang false. But smiling, 'Not for thee,' she said,  
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
 Shall burst her veil; marsh-divers, rather, maid,

100

Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass—and this  
A mere love-poem! O, for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight; they mind us of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.  
So, they blaspheme the muse! But great is song  
Used to great ends; ourself have often tried 120  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd  
The passion of the prophetess; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.  
Love is it? Would this same mock-love and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough! 130  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
That gives the manners of your country-women?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes  
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,  
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences 140  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;  
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.  
'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear, sir,' I;  
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,  
I smote him on the breast. He started up;  
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death;' 'To horse!  
Said Ida, 'home! to horse!' and fled, as flies  
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk 150  
When some one batters at the dove-cote doors,  
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart  
 In the pavilion. There like parting hopes  
 I heard them passing from me; hoof by hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!'  
 For blind with rage, she miss'd the plank, and roll'd  
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom; 160  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall. A glance I gave,  
 No more, but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged, and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
 Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd  
 To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave  
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught, 170  
 And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd  
 In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
 My burthen from mine arms; they cried, 'She lives.'  
 They bore her back into the tent: but I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
 Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot—  
 For since her horse was lost I left her mine—  
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft 180  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain, 190  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd  
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,

## THE PRINCESS

Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she,'  
 But it was Florian. 'Hist, O, hist!' he said,  
 'They seek us; out so late is out of rules.  
 Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is the cry.  
 How came you here?' I told him. 'I,' said he,  
 'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.  
 Arriving all confused among the rest  
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial; each  
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us; last of all,  
 Melissa; trust me, sir, I pitied her.  
 She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not,  
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied;  
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
 For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd  
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;  
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;  
 And I slipt out. But whither will you now?  
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled;  
 What, if together? that were not so well.  
 Would rather we had never come! I dread  
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

210

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I  
 That struck him; this is proper to the clown,  
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,  
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
 That which he says he loves. For Cyril, howe'er  
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips  
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
 These flashes on the surface are not he.  
 He has a solid base of temperament;  
 But as the water-lily starts and slides  
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

230

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near  
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, 'Names!'  
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began  
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
 And double in and out the boles. and race

240

By all the fountains. Fleet I was of foot;  
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind  
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear  
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine  
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
 And falling on my face was caught and known. 250

They haled us to the Princess where she sat  
 High in the hall; above her droop'd a lamp,  
 And made the single jewel on her brow  
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
 Prophet of storm; a handmaid on each side  
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair  
 Damp from the river; and close behind her stood  
 Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
 Huge women blowz'd with health, and wind, and rain, 260  
 And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;  
 Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
 An advent to the throne; and therebeside,  
 Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,  
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
 Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs, 270  
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect  
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator:

'T was not thus, O Princess, in old days;  
 You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips.  
 I led you then to all the Castalies;  
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;  
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
 Your second mother, those were gracious times.  
 Then came your new friend; you began to change—  
 I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool; 280  
 Till taken with her seeming openness  
 You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,  
 To me you froze; this was my meed for all.  
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
 And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
 And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
 And partly that you were my civil head,  
 And chiefly you were born for something great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
 When time should serve; and thus a noble scheme 290  
 Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;  
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
 Up in one night and due to sudden sun.  
 We took this palace; but even from the first  
 You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.  
 What student came but that you planed her path  
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
 A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean; 300  
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be known.  
 Then came these wolves; *they* knew her; *they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she to hear.  
 And me none told. Not less to an eye like mine,  
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot  
 Was to you. But I thought again; I fear'd  
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche;" you had gone to her, 310  
 She told, perforce, and winning easy grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown, the stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat  
 Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
 To push my rival out of place and power.  
 But public use required she should be known;  
 And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well, 320  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;  
 And yet this day—tho' you should hate me for it—  
 I came to tell you; found that you had gone,  
 Ridden to the hills, she likewise. Now, I thought,  
 That surely she will speak; if not, then I.  
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,  
 According to the coarseness of their kind,  
 For thus I hear; and known at last—my work—  
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame—  
 I grant in her some sense of shame—she flies; 330  
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
 I, that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,  
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast;  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff

For every gust of chance, and men will say  
 We did not know the real light, but chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased; the Princess answer'd coldly, 'Good;  
 Your oath is broken; we dismiss you, go.  
 For this lost lamb'—she pointed to the child—  
 'Our mind is changed; we take it to ourself.'

340

Thereat the lady stretch'd a vulture throat,  
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.  
 'The plan was mine. I built the nest,' she said,  
 'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag  
 Melissa. She, half on her mother propt,  
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast  
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
 A Niobeân daughter, one arm out,  
 Appealing to the bolts of heaven; and while  
 We gazed upon her came a little stir  
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
 A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd  
 Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head 360  
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
 When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;  
 For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,  
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard 370  
 In the dead hush the papers that she held  
 Rustle. At once the lost lamb at her feet  
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam.  
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd  
 The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say  
 'Read,' and I read—two letters—one her sire's:

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way  
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,

380



Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
 Into his father's hand, who has this night,  
 You lying close upon his territory,  
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus:  
 'You have our son; touch not a hair of his head;  
 Render him up unscathed; give him your hand;  
 Cleave to your contract—tho' indeed we hear  
 You hold the woman is the better man;  
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against their lords  
 Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your palace down;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us back  
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'

390

So far I read;  
 And then stood up and spoke impetuously:

'O, not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
 The child of regal compact, did I break  
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be. Hear me, for I bear,  
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
 Less mine than yours. My nurse would tell me of you;  
 I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me  
 From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south  
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn  
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;  
 The leader wild-swan in among the stars  
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light  
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
 Because I would have reach'd you, had you been  
 Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned  
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
 A man I came to see you; but, indeed,  
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
 On you, their centre. Let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman, town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen

420

The dwarfs of presage; tho' when known, there grew  
 Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing; but in you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down 430  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life; O, more than poor men wealth,  
 Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—but half 440  
 Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves  
 You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die.  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee  
 Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet. A tide of fierce 450  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam;  
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together; from the illumined hall  
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er the press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
 And gold and golden heads. They to and fro  
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,  
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the land,  
 And some that men were in the very walls,  
 And some they cared not; till a clamor grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
 And worse-confounded. High above them stood  
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head, but rising up  
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
 To the open window moved, remaining there  
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves 470

Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light  
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd  
 Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?  
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks; *I* dare  
 All these male thunderbolts; what is it ye fear?  
 Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come; 480  
 If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,  
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights  
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
 Die; yet I blame you not so much for fear;  
 Six thousand years of fear have made you that  
 From which I would redeem you. But for those  
 That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know  
 Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn  
 We hold a great convention; then shall they 490  
 That love their voices more than duty, learn  
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live  
 No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,  
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,  
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.' 500

She, ending, waved her hands; thereat the crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved; then with a smile, that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom  
 O thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

'You have done well and like a gentleman,  
 And like a prince; you have our thanks for all.  
 And you look well too in your woman's dress.  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life; we owe you bitter thanks. 510  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—  
 Then men had said—but now—what hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—  
 Yet since our father—wasps in our good hive,  
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—  
 O, would I had his sceptre for one hour!

You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—  
*I wed with thee! I bound by precontract*  
 Your bride, your bonds-lave! not tho' all the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us;  
 I trample on your offers and on you.  
 Begone; we will not look upon you more.  
 Here, push them out at gates.'

529

In wrath she spake.  
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd  
 Their motion. Twice I sought to plead my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
 The weight of destiny; so from her face  
 They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,  
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

530

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound  
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
 The voices murmuring. While I listen'd came  
 On a sudden a weird seizure and the doubt.  
 I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;  
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,  
 The jest and earnest working side by side,  
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night  
 With all its doings had and had not been,  
 And all things were and were not.

540

This went by  
 As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy—  
 Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts  
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
 To whom the touch of all mischance but came  
 As nigh to him that sitting on a hill  
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun  
 Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

550

### INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums  
 That beat to battle where he stands;  
 Thy face across his fancy comes,  
 And gives the battle to his hands.  
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
 He sees his brood about thy knee;  
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang. We thought her half-possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;  
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd  
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—  
Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end.  
And he that next inherited the tale,  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
'Sir Ralph has got your colors; if I prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?'  
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,' she said,  
'And make us all we would be, great and good.'  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

## V

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the palace,' I.  
'The second two; they wait,' he said, 'pass on;  
His Highness wakes;' and one, that clash'd in arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind. I stood and seem'd to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes  
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then  
A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,  
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings  
Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,  
The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,  
Panted from weary sides, 'King, you are free!  
We did but keep you surety for our son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,

That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge;'  
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,  
 More crumbled than a poppy from the sheath,  
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.  
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, 'Look,  
 He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan take  
 The old women and their shadows!'—thus the king  
 Roar'd—'make yourself a man to fight with men.  
 Go; Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink  
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
 From what was left of faded woman-slough  
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale  
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the earth,  
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us,  
 A little shy at first, but by and by  
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given  
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon  
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
 Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then we fell  
 Into your father's hand, and there she lies,  
 But will not speak nor stir.'

He show'd a tent  
 A stone-shot off; we enter'd in, and there  
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,  
 And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,  
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay;  
 And at her head a follower of the camp,  
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,' he whisper'd to her,  
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister; lie not thus,  
 What have you done but right? you could not slay  
 Me, nor your prince; look up, be comforted.  
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
 When fallen in darker ways.' And likewise I:  
 'Be comforted; have I not lost her too,  
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm  
 That none has else for me?' She heard, she moved,  
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,  
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded over death  
 In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said, 'my friend—  
 Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—  
 Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?  
 O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!  
 To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray  
 Take comfort; live, dear lady, for your child!  
 At which she lifted up her voice and cried:

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,  
 My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!  
 For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
 And either she will die from want of care,  
 Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
 The child is hers—for every little fault,  
 The child is hers; and they will beat my girl  
 Remembering her mother—O my flower!  
 Or they will take her, they will make her hard,  
 And she will pass me by in after-life  
 With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.  
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,  
 The horror of the shame among them all.  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
 And make a wild petition night and day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child;  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her.  
 Ah! what might that man not deserve of me  
 Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,'  
 Said Cyril, 'you shall have it!' but again  
 She vail'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so,  
 Like tender things that being caught feign death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

80

100

By this a murmur ran  
 Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the scouts  
 With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kings at parle; and 'Look you,' cried  
 My father, 'that our compact be fulfill'd.  
 You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man;  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him.  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;  
 She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
With our strange girl; and yet they say that still  
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:  
How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,  
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,  
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower  
Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—  
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
Three times a monster. Now she lightens scorn  
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate—  
And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
And every face she look'd on justify it—  
The general foe. More soluble is this knot  
By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
Your cities into shards with catapults?—  
She would not love—or brought her chain'd, a slave  
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord?  
Not ever would she love, but brooding turn  
The book of scorn, till all my fitting chance  
Were caught within the record of her wrongs  
And crush'd to death; and rather, Sire, than this  
I would the old god of war himself were dead,  
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,  
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake  
My father: 'Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
That idiot legend credible. Look you, sir!  
Man is the hunter; woman is his game.  
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;  
They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!  
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them  
As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in  
Among the women, snares them by the score  
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death  
He reddens what he kisses. Thus I won  
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness  
To such as her; if Cyril spake her true,



To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea, but, Sire,' I cried,  
'Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No!  
What dares not Ida do that she should prize  
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
No, not the soldier's; yet I hold her, king,  
True woman; but you clash them all in one,  
That have as many differences as we.  
The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm. One loves the soldier, one  
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need  
More breadth of culture. Is not Ida right?  
They worth it? truer to the law within?  
Severer in the logic of a life?

180

'Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you speak,  
My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,  
But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
But whole and one; and take them all-in-all,  
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
As dues of Nature. To our point; not war,  
Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'  
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself  
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then  
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida; *she* can talk;  
And there is something in it as you say:  
But you talk kindlier; we esteem you for it.—  
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
I would he had our daughter. For the rest,  
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,  
Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—

200

We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
 We pardon it; and your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land, 210  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,  
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream.  
 But let your Prince—our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe—ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac. Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida; something may be done—  
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will, 220  
 Follow us. Who knows? we four may build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring  
 In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke 230  
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised help and oozed  
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;  
 And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews  
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air  
 On our mail'd heads. But other thoughts than peace  
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares  
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers  
 With clamor; for among them rose a cry  
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum 240  
 Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;  
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
 The banner. Anon to meet us lightly pranced  
 Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
 Such thews of men. The midmost and the highest  
 Was Arac; all about his motion clung  
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance  
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;  
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,

And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike. Then took the king  
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them all. 260  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words:

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself  
Your captive, yet my father wills not war!  
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?  
But then this question of your troth remains; 270  
And there's a downright honest meaning in her.  
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet  
She ask'd but space and fair-play for her scheme;  
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!  
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;  
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?  
I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong;  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,  
And, right or wrong, I care not; this is all, 280  
I stand upon her side; she made me swear it—  
'Sdeath!—and with solemn rites by candle-light—  
Swear by Saint something—I forget her name—  
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;  
*She* was a princess too; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all; she will not; waive your claim.  
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to like!  
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'  
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!  
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,

260

270

280

290

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point  
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
'Decide it here; why not? we are three to three.'

300

Then spake the third: 'But three to three? no more?  
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
More, more, for honor! every captain waits  
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow  
Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.  
It needs must be for honor if at all;  
Since, what decision? if we fail we fail,  
And if we win we fail; she would not keep  
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will send to her,'  
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue; let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the word.'

310

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool; for none  
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say.  
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life; three times he went.  
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd;  
He batter'd at the doors, none came; the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence;  
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough  
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,  
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild. Not less one glance he caught  
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise  
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale; and yet her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

320

330

But when I told the king that I was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads;  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur;  
And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

350

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris  
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd. So here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and came;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling words  
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read:

360

'O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,  
What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;  
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those,—  
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops  
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion. And I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men; the old leaven leaven'd all;  
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
No woman named; therefore I set my face  
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.  
Far off from men I built a fold for them;  
I stored it full of rich memorial;  
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,  
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what  
Of insolence and love, some pretext held

380

Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their sport!—  
 I tamed my leopards; shall I not tame these? 39  
 Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd  
 In honor—what! I would not aught of false—  
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
 You draw from fight! You failing, I abide  
 What end soever; fail you will not. Still,  
 Take not his life, he risk'd it for my own;  
 His mother lives. Yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's angel guards you, you 400  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the aftertime,  
 Your very armor hallow'd and your statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's know herself;  
 And Knowledge in our own land make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned twins, 410  
 Commerce and Conquest, shower the fiery grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest:  
 'See that there be no traitors in your camp.  
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men!  
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here. Indeed I think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child 420  
 Of one unworthy mother, which she left.  
 She shall not have it back; the child shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning; there the tender orphan hands  
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world. Farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she may sit  
 Upon a king's right hand in thunderstorms,  
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho' yourself 430  
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.

When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,  
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all,—  
Man for the field and woman for the hearth;  
Man for the sword, and for the needle she;  
Man with the head, and woman with the heart;  
Man to command, and woman to obey;  
All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small good-man  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of hell  
Mix with his hearth. But you—she's yet a colt—  
Take, break her; strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.  
They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance.  
I like her none the less for rating at her!  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom.' Thus the hard old king.  
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon;  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause, 'take not his life;'  
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,  
And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win;'  
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to end.  
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse  
That one should fight with shadows and should fall;  
And like a flash the weird affection came.  
King, camp, and college turn'd to hollow shows;  
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream;  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again; at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears  
And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd

Of fighting. On his hunches rose the steed,  
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
 Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but kept their seats;  
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew;  
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down  
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere 490  
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
 And all the plain—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—  
 Shock'd, like an iron-clinging anvil bang'd  
 With hammers; till I thought, can this be he  
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,  
 The mother makes us most—and in my dream  
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
 And highest, among the statues, statue-like,  
 Between a cymbal's Miriam and a Jael, 500  
 With Psyche, babe, was Ida watching us,  
 A single band of gold about her hair,  
 Like a saint's glory up in heaven; but she,  
 No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
 Too hard, too cruel. Yet she sees me fight,  
 Yea, let her see me fall. With that I drave  
 Among the thickest and bore down a prince,  
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream  
 All that I would. But that large-moulded man,  
 His visage all agrin as at a wake, 510  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 And shadowing down the campaign till it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,  
 And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsman cry; for everything  
 Gave way before him. Only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right eye, 520  
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down.  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,  
 With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
 And threw him. Last I spurr'd; I felt my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,



I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me, and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead;  
She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

## VI

My dream had never died or lived again;  
As in some mystic middle state I lay.  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard;  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;  
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
'The Prince is slain!' My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

10

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm; there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

20

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand;  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,  
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

30

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; they struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

40

'And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken; fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three; but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,  
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.'

50

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest. By them went  
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade; but Blanche  
At distance follow'd. So they came: anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd  
That ho'ds a stately fretwork to the sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd,

60

Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said, 'You shall not lie in the tents, but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served  
With female hands and hospitality.'

80

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,  
She past my way. Up started from my side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,  
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dis helm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:  
'He saved my life; my brother slew him for it.'  
No more; at which the king in bitter scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,  
And held them up. She saw them, and a day  
Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche.  
And then once more she look'd at my pale face;  
Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind;  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;  
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth; she laid  
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives; he is not dead!  
O, let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace; we will tend on him  
Like one of these; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

110

She said; but at the happy word 'he lives!'  
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt  
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began

A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine—mine—not yours!  
 It is not yours, but mine; give me the child!'

Ceased all on tremble; piteous was the cry.  
 So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,  
 And turn'd each face her way. Wan was her cheek  
 With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,

And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
 The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared  
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,  
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
 The mother, me, the child. But he that lay  
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
 Trail'd himself up on one knee; then he drew  
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,  
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,  
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew  
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness  
 That with your long locks play the lion's mane!  
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.

What would you more? give her the child! remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation; he is dead,  
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be.  
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware  
 Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
 The common hate with the revolving wheel  
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis  
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,  
 And tread you out for ever. But howsoe'er  
 Fixt in yourself, never in your own arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
 Give her the child! O, if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,

Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,  
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,  
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,  
Give *me* it; *I* will give it her.' 170

He said.

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank  
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt  
Full on the child. She took it: 'Pretty bud!  
Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!  
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
Of traitorous friend and broken system made  
No purple in the distance, mystery,  
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell! 180  
These men are hard upon us as of old,  
We two must part; and yet how fain was I  
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think  
I might be something to thee, when I felt  
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast  
In the dead prime; but may thy mother prove  
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!  
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it  
Gentle as freedom'—here she kiss'd it; then—  
'All good go with thee! take it, sir,' and so  
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,  
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;  
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,  
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,  
And hid her bosom with it; after that  
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own land  
For ever. Find some other; as for me 206  
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me,  
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac: 'Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;  
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard  
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!  
I am your warrior; I and mine have fought  
Your battle. Kiss her; take her hand, she weeps.  
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground;  
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

210

‘I’ve heard that there is iron in the blood,  
 And I believe it. Not one word? not one?  
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,  
 Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.  
 She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—  
 “Our Ida has a heart”—just ere she died—  
 “But see that some one with authority  
 Be near her still;” and I—I sought for one—  
 All people said she had authority—  
 The Lady Blanche—much profit! Not one word;  
 No! tho’ your father sues. See how you stand  
 Stiff as Lot’s wife, and all the good knights maim’d,  
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
 For your wild whim. And was it then for this,  
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
 Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,  
 And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,  
 And many a pleasant hour with her that’s gone,  
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
 Speak to her, I say; is this not she of whom,  
 When first she came, all flush’d you said to me,  
 Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
 Now could you share your thought, now should men see  
 Two women faster welded in one love  
 Than pairs of wedlock? she you walk’d with, she  
 You talk’d with, whole nights long, up in the tower,  
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
 And right ascension, heaven knows what; and now  
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
 Not one to spare her! Out upon you, flint!  
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
 You shame your mother’s judgment too. Not one?  
 You will not? well—no heart have you, or such  
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.’  
 So said the small king moved beyond his wont.

220

230

240

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain’d of her force  
 By many a varying influence and so long.  
 Down thro’ her limbs a drooping languor wept;  
 Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
 In a still water. Then brake out my sire,  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds: ‘O you,

250

Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wish'd it—but we see  
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
 And think that you might mix his draught with death, 280  
 When your skies change again; the rougher hand  
 Is safer. On to the tents; take up the Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend  
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

'Come hither,

O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me, come,  
 Quick while I melt; make reconciliation sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour;  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so! 270  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!  
 I seem no more, *I* want forgiveness too;  
 I should have had to do with none but maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,  
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—why?—yet see  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him, 280  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it.  
 Taunt me no more; yourself and yours shall have  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth.  
 What use to keep them here—now? grant my prayer.  
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king;  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling even as they are.'

Passionate tears  
 Follow'd; the king replied not; Cyril said:  
 'Your brother, lady,—Florian,—ask for him  
 Of your great Head—for he is wounded too—  
 That you may tend upon him with the Prince.'  
 'Ay, so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 'Our laws are broken; let him enter too.'  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,

Petition'd too for him. 'Ay, so,' she said, 300  
 'I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour.  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'  
 'Ay, so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to hear  
 Your Highness; but your Highness breaks with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make; 't was I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
 And block'd them out; but these men came to woo  
 Your Highness,—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye; 310  
 But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too, 320  
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
 We brook no further insult, but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck  
 Was rosed with indignation; but the Prince  
 Her brother came; the king her father charm'd  
 Her wounded soul with word; nor did mine own  
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
 Straight to the doors; to them the doors gave way  
 Groaning, and in the vestal entry shriek'd 330  
 The virgin marble under iron heels.  
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there  
 Rested; but great the crush was, and each base,  
 To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers. At the further end  
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
 Bow-back'd with fear; but in the centre stood  
 The common men with rolling eyes; amazed 340  
 They glared upon the women, and aghast  
 The women stared at these, all silent, save  
 When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,



Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
 A flying splendor out of brass and steel,  
 That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,  
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame;  
 And now and then an echo started up,  
 And shuddering fled from room to room, and died  
 Of fright in far apartments.

350

Then the voice  
 Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance;  
 And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'  
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors  
 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
 To languid limbs and sickness, left me in it;  
 And others otherwise they laid; and all  
 That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
 And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
 Till happier times; but some were left of those  
 Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
 From those two hosts that lay beside the wall,  
 Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

360

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;  
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,  
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
 But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd,

I strove against the stream and all in vain;

Let the great river take me to the main.

No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;

Ask me no more.

## VII

So was their sanctuary violated,  
 So their fair college turn'd to hospital,  
 At first with all confusion; by and by  
 Sweet order lived again with other laws,  
 A kindlier influence reign'd, and everywhere  
 Low voices with the ministering hand  
 Hung round the sick. The maidens came, they talk'd,  
 They sang, they read; till she not fair began  
 To gather light, and she that was became  
 Her former beauty treble; and to and fro

10

With books, with flowers, with angel offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.  
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke; but oft  
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field. Void was her use,  
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,  
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn  
Expunge the world; so fared she gazing there,  
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she came,  
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

20

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark  
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life.  
And twilight gloom'd, and broader-grown the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves, and heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian; with her oft  
Melissa came, for Blanche had gone, but left  
Her child among us, willing she should keep  
Court-favor. Here and there the small bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw  
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

40

50

## THE PRINCESS

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields  
She needs must wed him for her own good name;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;  
Not tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd  
To incense the Head once more; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche; on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these; Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat.  
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,  
'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth;  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die;  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first

And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
For weakness. It was evening; silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought  
Two grand designs; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cram'd  
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
A train of dames. By axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,  
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,  
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused  
Hortensia, pleading; angry was her face.

110

I saw the forms; I knew not where I was.  
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more  
Sweet Ida. Palm to palm she sat; the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder seem'd. I moved, I sigh'd; a touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand.  
Then all for languor and self pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,  
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

120

'If you be what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself;  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing; only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die tonight.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

130

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,  
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd, she paused,  
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry,  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death,  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame; and all

140

Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
 Than in her mould that other, when she came  
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love,  
 And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she  
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out  
 For worship without end—nor end of mine,  
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,  
 Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,  
 Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a happy sleep.

150

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held  
 A volume of the poets of her land.  
 There to herself, all in low tones, she read:

160

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.  
 The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

'Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,  
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

'Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

'Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
 And slips into the bosom of the lake.  
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found a small  
 Sweet idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.  
 What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),  
 In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?  
 But cease to move so near the heavens and cease  
 To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,  
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
 And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
 For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
 And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
 Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
 Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
 Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
 With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,  
 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls

180

To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.  
 But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
 To find him in the valley; let the wild  
 Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave  
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
 That like a broken purpose waste in air.  
 So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales 200  
 Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I  
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
 And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned, while with shut eyes I lay  
 Listening, then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;  
 The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek 210  
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,  
 And the voice trembled and the hand. She said  
 Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
 In sweet humility, had fail'd in all;  
 That all her labor was but as a block  
 Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,  
 She still were loth to yield herself to one  
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights  
 Against the sons of men and barbarous laws.  
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her 220  
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power  
 In knowledge. Something wild within her breast,  
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.  
 And she had nursed me there from week to week;  
 Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
 To vex true hearts; yet was she but a girl—  
 'Ah fool, and made myself a queen of farce!  
 When comes another such? never, I think,  
 Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.'

Her voice 230  
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
 And her great heart thro' all the faultful past  
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;  
 Till notice of a change in the dark world  
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
 That early woke to feed her little ones,  
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light.  
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said, 'nor blame 240  
 Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;

These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink  
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free.

For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—  
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!

250

Our place is much; as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding her—  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.

For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse. Could we make her as the man,  
Sweet Love were slain; his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.

260

Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;  
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;

Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,

270

Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other even as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men;  
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm;  
Then springs the crowning race of human-kind.  
May these things be!

Sighing she spoke: 'I fear

280

They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch-word rest  
Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal. Each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
 The single pure and perfect animal,  
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream  
 That once was mine! what woman taught you this?'

290

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I know,  
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
 I loved the woman. He, that doth not, lives  
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime.  
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one  
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
 No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
 In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
 Interpreter between the gods and men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
 And girdled her with music. Happy he  
 With such a mother! faith in womankind  
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall  
 He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

300

310

'But I,'  
 Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—  
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with words;  
 This mother is your model. I have heard  
 Of your strange doubts; they well might be; I seem  
 A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince!  
 You cannot love me.'

'Nay, but thee,' I said,  
 'From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,  
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced  
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood; now,  
 Given back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,  
 Indeed I love. The new day comes, the light  
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
 Lived over. Lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,  
 My haunting sense of hollow shows; the change,  
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,  
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,

320

330



Like yonder morning on the blind half-world.  
 Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;  
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this  
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,  
 I waste my heart in signs; let be. My bride,  
 My wife, my life! O, we will walk this world,  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
 And so thro' those dark gates across the wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love thee; come,  
 Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine are one.  
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;  
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.'

340

## CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose.  
 The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,  
 'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,  
 'What if you drest it up poetically!'  
 So pray'd the men, the women; I gave assent.  
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven  
 Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?  
 The men required that I should give throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first;  
 The women—and perhaps they felt their power,  
 For something in the ballads which they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—  
 They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
 Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?  
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists;  
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
 And yet to give the story as it rose,  
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
 In our dispute; the sequel of the tale  
 Had touch'd her, and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,  
 She flung it from her, thinking; last, she fixt  
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
 'You—tell us what we are'—who might have told,  
 For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,  
 But that there rose a shout. The gates were closed  
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
 To take their leave, about the garden rails.

30

So I and some went out to these; we climb'd  
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
 The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;  
 Gray halls alone among their massive groves;  
 Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower  
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;  
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;  
 A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,  
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my college friend,  
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!  
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
 And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
 Some patient force to change them when we will,  
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—  
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,  
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
 In mock heroics stranger than our own;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

50

60

70

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full  
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams

Are but the needful preludes of the truth.  
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,  
 This fine old world of ours is but a child  
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
 To learn its limbs; there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails, 80  
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
 Among six boys, head under head, and look'd  
 No little lily-handed baronet he,  
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,  
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
 A patron of some thirty charities,  
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain, 80  
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;  
 Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those  
 That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—  
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
 To follow. A shout rose again, and made  
 The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
 From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer  
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang  
 Beyond the bourn of sunset—O, a shout  
 More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
 Premier or king! Why should not these great sirs  
 Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
 To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,  
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,  
 So much the gathering darkness charm'd; we sat  
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
 Perchance upon the future man. The walls 110  
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,  
 And gradually the powers of the night,  
 That range above the region of the wind,  
 Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up  
 Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
 Beyond all thought into the heaven of heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
 From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

*IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.*

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,  
For knowledge is of things we see;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
We mock thee when we do not fear:  
But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,  
What seem'd my worth since I began;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.  
1849.

I held it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn.'

## II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the underlying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;  
A web is woven across the sky;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost!

## IN MEMORIAM

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain,'  
That 'loss is common to the race'—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more.  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought;

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Expecting still his advent home;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
Or 'to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest;  
And thinking 'this will please him best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
And with the thought her color burns;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

### VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.



## IN MEMORIAM

### VIII

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber, and the street,  
For all is dark where thou are not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant in on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or, dying, there at least may die.

### IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favorable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## X

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
I hear the bell struck in the night;  
I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands;  
And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Oh where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine,  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall,  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my friend?  
Is this the end of all my care?'  
And circle moaning in the air,  
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed;  
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many years,  
I do not suffer in a dream;  
For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching sails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine,  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day;  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a laboring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

What words are these have fallen from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm,  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan?

## XVII

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week; the days go by;  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee,  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII

'T is well; 't is something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'T is little; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind.  
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

## XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak:  
'This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers: 'Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;  
Ye never knew the sacred dust.  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged;  
And one is sad; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stolen away.



## IN MEMORIAM

### XXII

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

### XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb,  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far,  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not when we moved therein?

## XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;  
I with it, for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fallen as soon as built—

O, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see—in Him is no before—  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ.  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new—  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time? They too will die.

## XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech;  
We heard them sweep the winter land;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us: surely rest is meet.  
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang: 'They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not, or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

## XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays  
Her early heaven, her happy views;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good.  
O, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And even for want of such a type.

## XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'T were hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house,  
'The cheeks drop in, the body bows;  
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
'The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:  
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek:  
'I am not worthy even to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries;



'For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,—  
And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said,—

'I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

## XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
And answering now my random stroke  
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
To thee too comes the golden hour  
When flower is feeling after flower;  
But Sorrow,—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—  
What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
And passes into gloom again.

## XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
Becoming as is meet and fit  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In those great offices that suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
Did ever rise from high to higher,  
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

## IN MEMORIAM

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
And I have lost the links that bound  
Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in death,  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.  
He still outstript me in the race;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows?

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Thro' all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and more;  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
Gives out at times—he knows not whence—  
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years—  
If Death so taste Lethean springs—  
May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O, turn thee round, resolve the doubt;  
My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that 'this is I;'

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'  
And finds 'I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of death.

## XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom.  
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd,  
The fruitful hours of still increase;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside;  
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good.  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

## XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;  
She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?  
There must be wisdom with great Death;  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall;  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou, thy plaintive song,'  
The Spirit of true love replied;  
'Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?  
What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;

'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide; thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

## LIII

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV

O, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete:



That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night;  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

## LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likeliest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;  
I care for nothing, all shall go.'

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death;  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song.  
Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind.  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave, said,  
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

## LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;  
And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.  
The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life;  
As I confess it needs must be?  
O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good?  
My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love;  
And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by;  
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!  
How should he love a thing so low?'

## LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

## LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale  
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labor of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands:  
'Does my old friend remember me?'

## LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west  
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,  
From off my bed the moonlight dies;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

## LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost;  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door;

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs;  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child;  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was bright;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf;  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I know; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long present of the past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,  
That so my pleasure may be whole;



While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:  
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
    May bind a book, may line a box,  
    May serve to curl a maiden's locks;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
    And, passing, turn the page that tells  
    A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
    Shall ring with music all the same;  
    To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
    The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
    The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
    No wing of wind the region swept,  
    But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
    Again our ancient games had place,  
    The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
    No single tear, no mark of pain—  
    O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!  
    No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
    Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,'—  
    Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
    I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

IN MEMORIAM

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in Nature's mint;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves, the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,  
'My love shall now no further range;  
There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear?'

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
 What end is here to my complaint?  
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
 'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain  
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

## LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and face;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks;  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth;  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart:  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long;  
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
 The little speedwell's darling blue,  
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou shouldst link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct, by paths of growing powers,  
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content?

## LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.



The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears.  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:  
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall:  
'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
Or so methinks the dead would say;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odor streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

## LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.  
I linger'd; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labor, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo?

## LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O, tell me where the senses mix,  
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
He mixt in all our simple sports;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man.'  
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

## XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise.

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands;  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!  
Whatever change the years have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat  
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm.  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

XCII

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
As but the canker of the brain;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year;  
And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name,  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.



## XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry;  
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
Of that glad year which once had been,  
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or even for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said,

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

## XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss;  
She knows not what his greatness is,  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
'I cannot understand; I love.'

### XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That city. All her splendor seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

IN MEMORIAM

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
    Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;  
    I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
    The birth, the bridal; friend from friend  
    Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
    By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
    Her shadow on the blaze of kings.  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
    With statelier progress to and fro  
    The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,  
    He told me, lives in any crowd,  
    When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
    So loud with voices of the birds,  
    So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men,

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
    On yon swell'n brook that bubbles fast  
    By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
    A song that slights the coming care,  
    And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

I climb the hill: from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the Lesser Wain  
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
The roofs that heard our earliest cry  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CIII

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was bred,  
I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me; distant hills  
From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever. Then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go;  
They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;



As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
This laurel, let this holly stand:  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows:  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood tused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years;  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
 To him who grasps a golden ball,  
 By blood a king, at heart a clown,—

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
 Will let his coltish nature break  
 At season's thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,  
 To whom a thousand memories call,  
 Not being less but more than all  
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
 Each office of the social hour  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye  
 Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
 And hope could never hope too much,  
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

## IN MEMORIAM

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

### CXIII

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

### CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain, and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too, and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.



## CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone,  
And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead,  
Less yearning for the friendship fled  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,  
And unto meeting, when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant laboring in his youth;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more; the city sleeps;  
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine eye;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was *born* to other things.

### CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;  
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
 While I rose up against my doom,  
 And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
 To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
 The strong imagination roll  
 A sphere of stars about my soul,  
 In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
 Divide us not, be with me now,  
 And enter in at breast and brow,  
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
 And like an inconsiderate boy,  
 As in the former flash of joy,  
 I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
 And every dewdrop paints a bow,  
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
 O earth, what changes hast thou seen!  
 There where the long street roars hath been  
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
 From form to form, and nothing stands;  
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
 Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
 And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, without;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess,—

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamor made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,  
She did but look through dimmer eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth;

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI

Love is and was my lord and king,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within the court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, even tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags!  
They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## IN MEMORIAM

### CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new—  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To camp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil coöperant to an end.

### CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal,  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
 I hear thee where the waters run;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;  
 My love is vaster passion now;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,  
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
 A voice as unto him that hears,  
 A cry above the conquer'd years  
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
 The truths that never can be proved  
 Until we close with all we loved,  
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

---

O true and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
 Since first he told me that he loved  
 A daughter of our house, nor proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this;



Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years; they went and came,  
Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;  
As gentle: liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm,  
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again  
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn.  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favor'd horses wait;  
They rise, but linger; it is late;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire.  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapor sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;  
And breaking let the splendor fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod  
This planet was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

# MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

## MAUD; A MONODRAMA

### PART I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood;  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
An Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground;  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

#### III

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,<sup>10</sup>  
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

#### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.  
Not he; his honest fame should at least by me be maintained;  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

## VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of peace? we have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

## VII

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

## VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die—who knows? we are ashes and dust.

## IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

## XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

## XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones!

## MAUD

### XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,<sup>50</sup>  
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and  
till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

### XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?  
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

### XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

### XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

### XVII

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire.  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;  
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

### XVIII

Maud, with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,  
Maud, the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud, with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,  
Maud, the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—<sup>70</sup>

## XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.  
 No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.  
 Thanks; for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.  
 I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm; God grant I may find it at last!  
 It will never be broken by Maud; she has neither savor nor salt,  
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
 Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her; where is the fault?  
 All that I saw—for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen—  
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd?  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?



## II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;  
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;  
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;  
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

## III

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?  
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd;  
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor,  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.  
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;  
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

## IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;  
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way.  
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;  
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;  
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## VI

A monstrous eft was of old the lord and master of earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:  
 He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

### VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;  
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice. 140  
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

### VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?  
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?  
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?  
*I* have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

### IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways, 150  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;  
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

### X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.  
Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will; 160  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall!  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,

Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

170

II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

III

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

180

VI

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud;  
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd,  
Caught, and cuff'd by the gale:  
I had fancied it would be fair.

II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

200

## III

And thus a delicate spark  
 Of glowing and growing light  
 Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
 Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
 Ready to burst in a color'd flame;  
 Till at last, when the morning came  
 In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
 But an ashen-gray delight.

210

## IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
 And smile as sunny as cold,  
 She meant to weave me a snare  
 Of some coquettish deceit,  
 Cleopatra-like as of old  
 To entangle me when we met,  
 To have her lion roll in a silken net  
 And fawn at a victor's feet.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
 Should Nature keep me alive,  
 If I find the world so bitter  
 When I am but twenty-five?  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

220

## VI

What if, tho' her eye seem'd full  
 Of a kind intent to me,  
 What if that dandy-despot, he,  
 That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
 That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian bull  
 Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
 Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
 Who wants the finer politic sense  
 To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
 With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
 What if he had told her yesternorn

230

How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd?

240

## VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

250

## VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turned to stone.

## IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

270

I have play'd with her when a child;  
 She remembers it now we meet.  
 Ah, well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
 By some coquettish deceit.  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

286

VII

Did I hear it half in a doze  
 Long since, I know not where?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
 When asleep in this arm-chair?

II

Men were drinking together,  
 Drinking and talking of me:  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
 Will have plenty; so let it be.'

290

III

Is it an echo of something  
 Read with a boy's delight,  
 Viziers nodding together  
 In some Arabian night?

Strange, that I hear two men,  
 Somewhere, talking of me:  
 'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
 Will have plenty; so let it be.'

300

VIII

She came to the village church,  
 And sat by a pillar alone;  
 An angel watching an urn

## MAUD

Wept over her, carved in stone;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante, 310  
Delicate-handed priest intone;  
And thought, is it pride? and mused and sigh'd,  
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor;  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land, 320  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone;  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

## X

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread? 330  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
Master of half a servile shire, 340  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,

And simper and set their voices lower,  
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
 New as his title, built last year,  
 There amid perky larches and pine,  
 And over the sullen-purple moor—  
 Look at it—pricking a cockney ear.

350

## II

What, has he found my jewel out?  
 For one of the two that rode at her side  
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he;  
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.  
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
 A bought commission, a waxen face,  
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
 At war with myself and a wretched race,  
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

Last week came one to the county town,  
 To preach our poor little army down,  
 And play the game of the despot kings,  
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well  
 This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,  
 Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings  
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
 This huckster put down war! can he tell  
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
 Put down the passions that make earth hell!  
 Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
 The bitter springs of anger and fear!  
 Down too, down at your own fireside,  
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
 For each is at war with mankind!

370

380



## IV

I wish I could hear again  
 The chivalrous battle-song  
 That she warbled alone in her joy!  
 I might persuade myself then  
 She would not do herself this great wrong,  
 To take a wanton dissolute boy  
 For a man and leader of men.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
 Like some of the simple great ones gone  
 For ever and ever by,  
 One still strong man in a blatant land,  
 Whatever they call him—what care I?—  
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
 Who can rule and dare not lie!

390

## VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
 That the man I am may cease to be!

## XI

O, let the solid ground  
 Not fail beneath my feet  
 Before my life has found  
 What some have found so sweet!  
 Then let come what come may,  
 What matter if I go mad,  
 I shall have had my day.

## II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
 Not close and darken above me  
 Before I am quite quite sure  
 That there is one to love me!  
 Then let come what come may  
 To a life that has been so sad,  
 I shall have had my day.

410

XII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

II

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I—who else?—was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

420

IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favor!  
O, Maud were sure of heaven  
If lowliness could save her!

VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
One is come to woo her.

## VIII

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling!  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

440

## XIII

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride!  
I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair?  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonized me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
 That old man never comes to his place;  
 Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?  
 For only once, in the village street,  
 Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
 A gray old wolf and a lean.  
 Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;  
 For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
 She might by a true descent be untrue;  
 And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet,  
 Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
 To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
 Her mother has been a thing complete,  
 However she came to be so allied.  
 And fair without, faithful within,  
 Maud to him is nothing akin.  
 Some peculiar mystic grace  
 Made her only the child of her mother,  
 And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
 On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
 All, all upon the brother.

480

## IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!  
 Has not his sister smiled on me?

## XIV

Maud has a garden of roses  
 And lilies fair on a lawn;  
 There she walks in her state  
 And tends upon bed and bower,  
 And thither I climb'd at dawn  
 And stood by her garden-gate.  
 A lion ramps at the top,  
 He is claspt by a passion-flower.

490

Maud's own little oak-room—  
 Which Maud, like a precious stone  
 Set in the heart of the carven gloom,

Lights with herself, when alone  
 She sits by her music and books  
 And her brother lingers late  
 With a roystering company—looks  
 Upon Maud's own garden-gate;  
 And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
 As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
 On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
 Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,  
 Like a beam of the seventh heaven, down to my side,  
 There were but a step to be made.

510

III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
 And again seem'd overbold;  
 Now I thought that she cared for me,  
 Now I thought she was kind  
 Only because she was cold.

I heard no sound where I stood  
 But the rivulet on from the lawn  
 Running down to my own dark wood,  
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd  
 Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;  
 But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld  
 The death-white curtain drawn,  
 Felt a horror over me creep,  
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
 Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,  
 Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

520

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer,  
 That if *I* be dear to some one else,  
 Then some one else may have much to fear;  
 But if *I* be dear to some one else,  
 Then I should be to myself more dear.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else?

530

## XVI

This lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight;  
 And so that he find what he went to seek,  
 And fulsome pleasure clog him, and drown 540  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone for a week.  
 But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O, this is the day!  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way?  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast.  
 And dream of her beauty with tender dread, 550  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not—O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it!  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord, 560  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die. 570

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
     From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
     Till the maiden yields.  
 Rosy is the West,  
     Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
     And a rose her mouth.  
 When the happy Yes  
     Falters from her lips, 580  
 Pass and blush the news  
     Over glowing ships;  
 Over blowing seas,  
     Over seas at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
     Blush it thro' the West;  
 Till the red man dance  
     By his red cedar-tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
     Leap, beyond the sea. 594  
 Blush from West to East,  
     Blush from East to West,  
 Till the West is East,  
     Blush it thro' the West.  
 Rosy is the West,  
     Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
     And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.  
 There is none like her, none. 606  
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
 And sweetly, on and on  
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
 Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## II

None like her, none.  
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,

And shook my heart to think she comes once more.  
 But even then I heard her close the door;  
 The gates of heaven are closed, and she is gone.

610

## III

There is none like her, none,  
 Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
 In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,  
 Sighing for Lebanon,  
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
 And looking to the South and fed  
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
 And haunted by the starry head  
 Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
 And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;  
 And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
 With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
 Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came?

## IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
 And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
 Go in and out as if at merry play,  
 Who am no more so all forlorn  
 As when it seem'd far better to be born  
 To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand  
 Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
 That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
 His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
 Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
 The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
 And do accept my madness, and would die  
 To save from some slight shame one simple girl?—



## VI

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give  
 More life to Love than is or ever was  
 In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.  
 Let no one ask me how it came to pass;  
 It seems that I am happy, that to me  
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,  
 And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?  
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

## VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
 And died to live, long as my pulses play;  
 But now by this my love has closed her sight  
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
 Among the fragments of the golden day.  
 May nothing there her maiden grace affright!  
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
 My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;  
 It is but for a little space I go.  
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
 Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?  
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
 That seems to draw—but it shall not be so;  
 Let all be well, be well.

670

680

## XIX

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O, when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,

690

Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and mine;  
For who was left to watch her but I?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk—  
For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless things—  
But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin.  
I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin  
That I felt she was slowly dying  
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt;  
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within!

## IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn.

How strange was what she said,  
 When only Maud and the brother  
 Hung over her dying bed—  
 That Maud's dark father and mine  
 Had bound us one to the other,  
 Betrothed us over their wine,  
 On the day when Maud was born;  
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath!  
 Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death!  
 Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn!

720

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bound,  
 That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet;  
 And none of us thought of a something beyond,  
 A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,  
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;  
 And I was cursing them and my doom,  
 And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
 Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
 To be friends, to be reconciled!

730

VI

But then what a flint is he!  
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
 I find whenever she touch'd on me  
 This brother had laugh'd her down,  
 And at last, when each came home,  
 He had darken'd into a frown,  
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
 To me, her friend of the years before;  
 And this was what had redden'd her cheek  
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

740

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
 To the faults of his heart and mind,  
 I see she cannot but love him,  
 And says he is rough but kind,  
 And wishes me to approve him,  
 And tells me, when she lav

750

Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

## VIII

Kind? but the death-bed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be so,  
For shall not Maud have her will?

760

## IX

For Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt  
That I never can hope to pay;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours,  
O, then, what then shall I say?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet!

770

## X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry,  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

780

## XX

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that *I* tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy;  
The Sultan, as we name him—

790

She did not wish to blame him—  
 But he vexed her and perplexed her  
 With his worldly talk and folly.  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claims her as his due?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,  
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
 Be the neater and completer;  
 For nothing can be sweeter  
 Than maiden Maud in either.

800

II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
 Our ponderous squire will give  
 A grand political dinner  
 To half the squirelings near;  
 And Maud will wear her jewels,  
 And the bird of prey will hover,  
 And the titmouse hope to win her  
 With his chirrup at her ear.

811

III

A grand political dinner  
 To the men of many acres,  
 A gathering of the Tory,  
 A dinner and then a dance  
 For the maids and marriage-makers,  
 And every eye but mine will glance  
 At Maud in all her glory.

820

IV

For I am not invited,  
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
 I am all as well delighted,  
 For I know her own rose-garden,  
 And mean to linger in it

Till the dancing will be over;  
 And then, O, then, come out to me  
 For a minute, but for a minute,  
 Come out to your own true lover,  
 That your true lover may see  
 Your glory also, and render  
 All homage to his own darling,  
 Queen Maud in all her splendor.

## XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
 And bringing me down from the Hall  
 This garden-rose that I found,  
 Forgetful of Maud and me,  
 And lost in trouble and moving round  
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
 And trying to pass to the sea;  
 O rivulet, born at the Hall,  
 My Maud has sent it by thee—  
 If I read her sweet will right—  
 On a blushing mission to me,  
 Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be  
 Among the roses to-night.'

## XXII

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone;  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

850

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky,  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

860

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone?  
She is weary of dance and play.'  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

870

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

890

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
 That white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;  
 But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me;  
 The lilies and roses were all awake, 900  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dancers are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate. 910  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate.  
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'  
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'  
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'  
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

## XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
 My dust would hear her and beat, 920  
 Had I lain for a century dead,  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.



## PART II

## I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there arises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land—  
 What is it, that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
 The fires of hell and of hate;  
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
 When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
 He came with the babe-faced lord,  
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace;  
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
 He fiercely gave me the lie,  
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
 Struck me before the languid fool,  
 Who was gaping and grinning by; 20  
 Struck for himself an evil stroke,  
 Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe.  
 For front to front in an hour we stood,  
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
 And thunder'd up into heaven the Christless code  
 That must have life for a blow.  
 Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.  
 Was it he lay there with a fading eye?  
 'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!' 30  
 Then glided out of the joyous wood  
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know,  
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
 A cry for a brother's blood;  
 It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
 What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive.  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust;  
We are not worthy to live.

40

### II

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

### II

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

60

### III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of this house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

### IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,

Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand!

Breton, not Briton; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

90

VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear,  
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

100

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings—  
For he had many, poor worm—and thought,  
It is his mother's hair.

### IX

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?  
Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
While I am over the sea!  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die!

129

### III

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone;  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone!—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply:  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

### IV

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

## II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

## III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee.  
Ah, Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be!

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

160

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

170

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendor falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet.  
She is walking in the meadow,

And the woodland echo rings;  
In a moment we shall meet.  
She is singing in the meadow, 180  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;  
For a tumult shakes the city, 190  
And I wake, my dream is fled.  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold!

## VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about!  
'Tis the blot upon the brain 200  
That *will* show itself without.

## IX

Then I rise, the eve-drops fall,  
And the yellow vapors choke  
The great city sounding wide;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame;  
It crosses here, it crosses there, 210  
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall!

220

XII

Would the happy spirit descend  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest'?

XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me.  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

230

V

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead!  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,

240

With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter;  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so.  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

## II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man; 2  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read.  
 It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;  
 There is none that does his work, not one.  
 A touch of their office might have sufficed,  
 But the churchmen fain would kill their church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress;  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying 270  
 To his own great self, as I guess;  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient—all for what?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV

Nothing but idiot gabble!  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold;  
 Not let any man think for the public good,  
 But babble, merely for babble.  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,



But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;  
Everything came to be known.  
Who told *him* we were there?

290

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie;  
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack—  
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;  
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,  
But I know that he lies and listens mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes.  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!  
It is all used up for that.

300

VII

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind;  
He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.  
She is not *of* us, as I divine,  
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,  
Still<sup>er</sup>, not fairer than mine.

VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season is good,  
To the sound of dancing music and flutes:  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;  
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side?

310

320

But what will the old man say?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;  
 Yet now I could even weep to think of it;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

## X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;  
 But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
 Are scarcely even akin. 330

## XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb.  
 I will cry to the steps above my head  
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper. 340

## PART III

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing.  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars— 10

'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire.  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,  
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I,—  
For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true,—  
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
And I stood on a giant deck and mixt my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar,  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,

And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
 The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind.  
 It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

### THE BROOK

'HERE by this brook we parted, I to the East  
 And he for Italy—too late—too late:  
 One whom the strong sons of the world despise;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for cent.  
 Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 O, had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say  
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then; but life in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
 And nothing perfect. Yet the brook he loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or even the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy  
 To me that loved him; for "O brook," he says,  
 "O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,  
 "Whence come you?" and the brook—why not?—replies:

20

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally,  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

30

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird,  
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery water-break  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
 For here I came, twenty years back—the week  
 Before I parted with poor Edmund—crost  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,  
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
 Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement, "Run,"  
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
 "Run, Katie!" Katie never ran; she moved  
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

80

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense  
 Had Katie; not illiterate, nor of those  
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,  
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?  
 What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;  
 James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,  
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.  
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
 And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
 Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
 On garden gravel, let my query pass  
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
 If James were coming. "Coming every day,"  
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
 But evermore her father came across  
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;  
 And James departed vexed with him and her."  
 How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"—  
 Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke—  
 "O, would I take her father for one hour,  
 For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"  
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

100

110

‘O Katie, what I suffer’d for your sake!  
For in I went, and call’d old Philip out  
To show the farm. Full willingly he rose;  
He led me thro’ the short sweet-smelling lanes  
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens,  
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts.  
Then from the plaintive mother’s teat he took  
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were;  
Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur’s deer. In copse and fern  
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said,  
“That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.”  
And there he told a long, long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wish’d,  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he ask’d,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm, and so the matter hung;  
He gave them line; and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer’d something more,  
But he stood firm, and so the matter hung;  
He knew the man, the colt would fetch its price;  
He gave them line; and how by chance at last—  
It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May—  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
And there he mellow’d all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

‘Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he—  
Poor fellow, could he help it?—recommended.  
And ran thro’ all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Taltivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still; and so  
We turn’d our foreheads from the falling sun,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And following our own shadows thrice as long  
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,  
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots, 174  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars 180  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars,  
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi, sleeps in peace; and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb;  
I scraped the lichen from it. Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in April-autumns. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within;  
Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you from the farm?'  
'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little; pardon me, 210  
What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.



What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my name.'  
 'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplexed,  
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
 Then looking at her: 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
 To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
 About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

220

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
 Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-field;  
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!'

## THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
 In lands of palm and southern pine;  
     In lands of palm, or orange-blossom,  
 Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine!

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
 In ruin, by the mountain road;  
     How like a gem, beneath, the city  
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd!

How richly down the rocky dell  
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
     To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
 That only heaved with a summer swell!

What slender campanili grew  
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
     Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew!

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
 Yet present in his natal grove,  
     Now watching high on mountain cornice,  
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him!

Nor knew we well what pleased us most;  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast,  
But distant color, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

30

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours;  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers!

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet!

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma,  
At Lodi rain, Piacenza rain.

And stern and sad—so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight—look'd the Lombard piles;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

60

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.

I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there

A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air!

Remember how we came at last  
To Como; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded; and how we past

70

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,

The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of 'Lari Maxume,' all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on the Lariano crept

To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,

The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew;

But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea,

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold;

Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nursling of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by;

100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens heaven and earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

#### TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy;  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty thousand college-councils  
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome—  
Take it and come—to the Isle of Wight;

10

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine;

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand,  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin,  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances,—  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win;

30.

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God,—

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor,  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime or spongy-wet,  
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,—  
Crocus, anemone, violet,—

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.  
January, 1854.

## WILL

O, WELL for him whose will is strong!  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.  
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still!

He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
 And o'er a weary sultry land,  
 Far beneath a blazing vault,  
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

BURY the Great Duke  
 With an empire's lamentation;  
 Let us bury the Great Duke  
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;  
 Mourning when their leaders fall,  
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?  
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
 Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
 And the feet of those he fought for,  
 Echo round his bones for evermore.

### III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
 As fits an universal woe,  
 Let the long, long procession go,  
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
 And let the mournful martial music blow;  
 The last great Englishman is low.

### IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
 Remembering all his greatness in the past.  
 No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
 With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!  
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
 The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
 Whole in himself, a common good.

Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
 Great in council and great in war,  
 Foremost captain of his time,  
 Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And, as the greatest only are,  
 In his simplicity sublime.  
 O good gray head which all men knew,  
 O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
 O fallen at length that tower of strength  
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!  
 Such was he whom we deplore.  
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

All is over and done.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 England, for thy son.  
 Let the bell be toll'd.  
 Render thank to the Giver.  
 And render him to the mould.  
 Under the cross of gold  
 That shines over city and river,  
 There he shall rest for ever  
 Among the wise and the bold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd,  
 And a reverent people behold  
 The towering car, the sable steeds.  
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
 Dark in its funeral fold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd,  
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;  
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd  
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;  
 He knew their voices of old.  
 For many a time in many a clime  
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.  
 When he with those deep voices wrought,  
 Guarding realms and kings from shame,  
 With those deep voices our dead captain taught  
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim

In that dread sound to the great name  
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
 In praise and in dispraise the same,  
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
 O civic muse, to such a name,  
 To such a name for ages long,  
 To such a name,  
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
 And ever-echoing avenues of song!

## VI

'Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest,  
 With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,  
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?'—  
 Mighty Seaman, this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea.  
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,  
 The greatest sailor since our world began.  
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
 For this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea.  
 His foes were thine; he kept us free;  
 O, give him welcome, this is he  
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
 And worthy to be laid by thee;  
 For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won;  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,



## ODE ON THE DEATH OF WELLINGTON

Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close.  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;  
A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square,  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.  
So great a soldier taught us there  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all,  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!  
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
Eternal honor to his name.

150

### VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!  
 O statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul 160  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march of mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170  
 Remember him who led your hosts;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power; 180  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high and low;  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life;  
 Who never spoke against a foe;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right.  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
 Whatever record leap to light 190  
 He never shall be shamed.

## VIII

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great  
 But as he saves or serves the state. 200  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-story  
 The path of duty was the way to glory.

He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outredden  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story  
The path of duty was the way to glory. 210  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he: his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure  
Let his great example stand 220  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;  
Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory.  
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame  
For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illumined cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him, 230  
Eternal honor to his name.

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see.  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung.  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung. 240  
Ours the pain, be his the gain!  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity  
Whom we see not we revere;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,

And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane:  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,  
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
 Until we doubt not that for one so true  
 There must be other nobler work to do  
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
 And Victor he must ever be.  
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
 And break the shore, and evermore  
 Make and break, and work their will,  
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
 Round us, each with different powers,  
 And other forms of life than ours,  
 What know we greater than the soul?  
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.  
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;  
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;  
 The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
 Gone, but nothing can bereave him  
 Of the force he made his own  
 Being here, and we believe him  
 Something far advanced in State,  
 And that he wears a truer crown  
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
 Speak no more of his renown,  
 Lay your earthly fancies down,  
 And in the vast cathedral leave him,  
 God accept him, Christ receive him!  
 1852.

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## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

## I

HALF a league, half a league,  
 Half a league onward,  
 All in the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.  
 'Forward the Light Brigade!  
 Charge for the guns!' he said.  
 Into the valley of Death  
 Rode the six hundred.

## II

'Forward the Light Brigade!'  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd.  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die.  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell,  
Rode the six hundred.

## IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd.  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not,  
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,

They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honor the charge they made!  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

# IDYLLS OF THE KING

## IN TWELVE BOOKS

*'Flos Regum Arthurus.'*—JOSEPH OF EXETER

THE COMING OF ARTHUR  
GARETH AND LYNETTE  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT  
GERAINT AND ENID  
BALIN AND BALAN  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE  
THE HOLY GRAIL  
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
GUINEVERE  
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

### DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me.  
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
'Who revered his conscience as his king;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;  
Who loved one only and who clave to her—'  
Her—over all whose realms to their last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him; he is gone.  
We know him now; all narrow jealousies  
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that;  
Not making his high place the lawless perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,

10

In that fierce light which beats upon a throne  
 And blackens every blot; for where is he  
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?  
 Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons  
 Hope more for these than some inheritance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her poor—  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart but still endure;  
 Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star  
 Which shone so close beside thee that ye made  
 One light together, but has past and leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee.  
 The love of all thy sons encompass thee,  
 The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,  
 The love of all thy people comfort thee,  
 Till God's love set thee at his side again!

50

### THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the king of Cameliard,  
 Had one fair daughter, and none other child;  
 And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
 Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
 Ruled in this isle and, ever waging war  
 Each upon other wasted all the land;  
 And still from time to time the heathen host  
 Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what was left.  
 And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,  
 Wherein the beast was ever more and more,  
 But man was less and less, till Arthur came.

10



For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,  
And after him King Uther fought and died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.  
And after these King Arthur for a space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,  
Drew all their petty principedoms under him,  
Their king and head, and made a realm and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;  
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat  
To human sucklings; and the children, housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,  
Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again  
And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,  
Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,  
And on the spike that split the mother's heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,  
Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—the King  
Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us thou!  
For here between the man and beast we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,  
But heard the call and came; and Guinevere  
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;  
But since he neither wore on helm or shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglyhood,  
But rode a simple knight among his knights,  
And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life

Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd  
 His tents beside the forest. Then he drave  
 The heathen: after, slew the beast, and fell'd  
 The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
 Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,  
 And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
 A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
 Of those great lords and barons of his realm  
 Flash'd forth and into war; for most of these,  
 Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,  
 Made head against him, crying: 'Who is he  
 That he should rule us? who hath proven him  
 King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,  
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,  
 Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
 This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;  
 This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt  
 Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
 Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere,  
 And thinking as he rode: 'Her father said  
 That there between the man and beast they die.  
 Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
 Up to my throne and side by side with me?  
 What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
 Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
 O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
 Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd  
 To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
 And cannot will my will nor work my work  
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm  
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,  
 Then might we live together as one life,  
 And reigning with one will in everything  
 Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
 And power on this dead world to make it live.'

80

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the tale—  
 When Arthur reach'd a field of battle bright  
 With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world  
 Was all so clear about him that he saw  
 The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
 And even in high day the morning star.  
 So when the King had set his banner broad,  
 At once from either side, with trumpet-blast,

100

And shouts and clarions shrilling unto blood,  
The long-lanced battle let their horses run.  
And now the barons and the kings prevail'd,  
And now the King, as here and there that war  
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk the world  
Made lightnings and great thunders over him,  
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main might,  
And mightier of his hands with every blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw the kings, 110  
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
Claudius, and Clariance of Northumberland,  
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself alone  
And all the world asleep, they swerved and brake  
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands  
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they yield!' 120  
So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.  
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved  
And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt me King,  
So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-day.'  
'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of God  
Descends upon thee in the battle-field.  
I know thee for my King!' Whereat the two,  
For each had wardied either in the fight, 130  
Sware on the field of death a deathless love.  
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in man;  
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he sent  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,  
Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee well,  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart  
Debating—'How should I that am a king,  
However much he help me at my need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
And a king's son?'—lifted his voice, and call'd 140  
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
He trusted all things, and of him required  
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said:  
 Sir King, there be but two old men that know;  
 And each is twice as old as I; and one  
 Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
 King Uther thro' his magic art, and one  
 Is Merlin's master—so they call him—Bleys,  
 Who taught him magic: but the scholar ran  
 Before the master, and so far that Bleys  
 Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote  
 All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
 In one great annal-book, where after-years  
 Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

156

To whom the King Leodogran replied:  
 'O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
 By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
 Then beast and man had had their share of me;  
 But summon here before us yet once more  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

160

Then, when they came before him, the king said:  
 'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,  
 And reason in the chase; but wherefore now  
 Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,  
 Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
 Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,  
 Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?'

170

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'  
 Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake—  
 For bold in heart and act and word was he,  
 Whenever slander breathed against the King—

'Sir, there be many rumors on this head;  
 For there be those who hate him in their hearts,  
 Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,  
 And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man;  
 And there be those who deem him more than man,  
 And dream he dropt from heaven. But my belief  
 In all this matter—so ye care to learn—  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that held  
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne;  
 And daughters had she borne him,—one whereof,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne.

180

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And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;  
But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,  
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love  
That Gorloïs and King Uther went to war,  
And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.  
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,  
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in, 200  
And there was none to call to but himself.  
So, compass'd by the power of the king,  
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
And with a shameful swiftness; afterward,  
Not many moons, King Uther died himself,  
Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.  
And that same night, the night of the new year,  
By reason of the bitterness and grief  
That vexed his mother, all before his time 210  
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
Until his hour should come, because the lords  
Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child  
Piecemeal among them, had they known; for each  
But sought to rule for his own self and hand,  
And many hated Uther for the sake  
Of Gorloïs. Wherefore Merlin took the child,  
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife  
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own;  
And no man knew. And ever since the lords  
Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,  
So that the realm has gone to wrack; but now,  
This year, when Merlin—for his hour had come—  
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,  
Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your king,"  
A hundred voices cried: "Away with him! 220  
No king of ours! a son of Gorloïs he,  
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his craft,  
And while the people clamor'd for a king,  
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great lords  
Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the king debated with himself  
If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,

Or born the son of Gorlois after death,  
 Or Uther's son and born before his time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Said by these three, there came to Camelard,  
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;  
 Whom as he could, not as he would, the king  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat:  
 'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.  
 Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his men  
 Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye this king—  
 So many those that hate him, and so strong,  
 So few his knights, however brave they be—  
 Hath body enow to hold his foemen down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell thee: few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him;  
 For I was near him when the savage yells  
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
 Crowned on the daïs, and his warriors cried,  
 "Be thou the king, and we will work thy will  
 Who love thee." Then the King in low deep tones,  
 And simple words of great authority,  
 Bound them by so strait vows to his own self  
 That when they rose, knighted from kneeling, some  
 Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes  
 Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

260

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his Table Round  
 With large, divine, and comfortable words,  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
 A momentary likeness of the King;  
 And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
 And those around it and the Crucified,  
 Down from the casement over Arthur, smote  
 Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,  
 One falling upon each of three fair queens  
 Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends  
 Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

270

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit  
 And hundred winters are but as the hands  
 Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

280

'And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,  
Who knows a subtler magic than his own—  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.  
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted sword,  
Whereby to drive the heathen out. A mist  
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;  
But there was heard among the holy hymns  
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep—calm, whatsoever storms  
May shake the world—and when the surface rolls,  
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

290

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword  
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so bright  
That men are blinded by it—on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,  
"Take me," but turn the blade and ye shall see,  
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,  
"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's face  
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast away  
Is yet far-off." So this great brand the king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.'

300

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,  
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;  
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the king.  
She answer'd, 'These be secret things,' and sign'd  
To those two sons to pass, and let them be.  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw;  
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half-heard—the same that afterward  
Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

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And then the Queen made answer: 'What know I?  
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea, and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness; but this king is fair  
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world."'

'Ay,' said the king, 'and hear ye such a cry?  
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell thee true.  
He found me first when yet a little maid.  
Beaten I had been for a little fault  
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,  
And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead; and he—  
I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk  
Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,  
And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
And many a time he came, and evermore  
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad  
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,  
Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,  
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.  
And now of late I see him less and less,  
But those first days had golden hours for me,  
For then I surely thought he would be king.

350

'But let me tell thee now another tale:  
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,  
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his life.  
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage;  
And when I enter'd told me that himself  
And Merlin ever served about the king,  
Uther, before he died; and on the night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still king, and passing forth to breathe,  
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm  
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night  
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—



Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof  
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
 Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
 And gone as soon as seen. And then the two  
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,  
 Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,  
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep  
 And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame;  
 And down the wave and in the flame was borne  
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
 Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried, "The King!  
 Here is an heir for Uther!" And the fringe  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
 So that the child and he were clothed in fire.  
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars. "And this same child," he said,  
 "Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace  
 Till this were told." And saying this the seer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,  
 Not ever to be question'd any more  
 Save on the further side; but when I met  
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—  
 The shining dragon and the naked child  
 Descending in the glory of the seas—  
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
 In riddling triplets of old time, and said:—

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400

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!  
 A young man will be wiser by and by;  
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!  
 And the truth is this to me, and that to thee;  
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows;  
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou  
 Fear not to give this King thine only child,  
 Guinevere; so great bards of him will sing  
 Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old  
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time

Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn  
 Tho' men may wound him that he will not die, 420  
 But pass, again to come, and then or now  
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
 Till these and all men hail him for their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
 But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'  
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,  
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
 Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,  
 Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope 430  
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,  
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,  
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze  
 And made it thicker; while the phantom king  
 Sent out at times a voice; and here or there  
 Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest  
 Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,  
 No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'  
 Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze 440  
 Descended, and the solid earth became  
 As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,  
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
 Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved  
 And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth  
 And bring the Queen, and watch'd him from the gates;  
 And Lancelot past away among the flowers—  
 For then was latter April—and return'd  
 Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.  
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,  
 Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King  
 That morn was married, while in stainless white,  
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
 And glorying in their vows and him, his knights  
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.  
 Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,  
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
 The sun of May descended on their King,  
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,  
 Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, while the two

Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love.  
 And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is mine.  
 Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!'  
 To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,  
 'King and my lord, I love thee to the death!'  
 And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake:  
 'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world  
 Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,  
 And all this Order of thy Table Round  
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine  
 Great lords from Rome before the portal stood,  
 In scornful stillness gazing as they past;  
 Then while they paced a city all on fire  
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,  
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King:—

480

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May!  
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!  
 Blow thro' the living world—"Let the King reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?  
 Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon helm,  
 Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard  
 That God hath told the King a secret word.  
 Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.  
 Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the lust!  
 Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

490

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,  
 The King is king, and ever wills the highest.  
 Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!  
 Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!  
 Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the King,  
 In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.  
 Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the King reign!'

500

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.  
 There at the banquet those great lords from Rome,  
 The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
 Strode in and claim'd their tribute as of yore.  
 But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these have sworn  
 To wage my wars, and worship me their King;  
 The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
 And we that fight for our fair father Christ,

Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old  
 To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,  
 No tribute will we pay.' So those great lords  
 Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space  
 Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King  
 Drew in the petty principdoms under him,  
 Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame  
 The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

### THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE  
 THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT  
 GERAINT AND ENID  
 BALIN AND BALAN  
 MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE  
 THE HOLY GRAIL  
 PELLEAS AND ETARRE  
 THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
 GUINEVERE

### GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
 And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
 Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted pine  
 Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.  
 'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a false knight  
 Or evil king before my lance, if lance  
 Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,  
 Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—  
 And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows  
 And mine is living blood. Thou dost His will,  
 The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,  
 Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall  
 Linger with vacillating obedience,  
 Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to—  
 Since the good mother holds me still a child!  
 Good mother is bad mother unto me!  
 A worse were better; yet no worse would I.  
 Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force  
 To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,  
 Until she let me fly discharg'd to sweep  
 In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
 To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop  
 Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,  
 A knight of Arthur, working out his will,  
 To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came  
 With Modred hither in the summer-time,

Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.  
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.  
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,  
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said so—he—  
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,  
For he is always sullen—what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair  
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,  
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She laugh'd,  
'Thou art but a wild-goose, to question it.'  
'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he said,  
'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,  
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,  
An 't were but of the goose and golden eggs.'

40

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:  
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine  
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;  
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.  
And there was ever haunting round the palm  
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought,  
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,  
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings.'  
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,  
One that had loved him from his childhood caught  
And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy neck,  
I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his neck,  
But brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away.'

50

To whom the mother said,  
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,  
And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

60

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:  
'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or she,  
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been  
Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel  
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,  
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,

And there were cries and clashings in the nest,  
That sent him from his senses. Let me go.'

70

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said:  
'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
Lies like a dog, and all but smoulder'd out!  
For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the barons' war,  
And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there  
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,  
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.  
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.  
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,  
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,  
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
Or wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance  
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,  
Frights to my heart. But stay; follow the deer  
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;  
So make thy manhood mightier day by day.  
Sweet is the chase; and I will seek thee out  
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace  
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,  
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.  
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man.'

80

Then Gareth: 'An ye hold me yet for child,  
Hear yet once more the story of the child.  
For, mother, there was once a king, like ours.  
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,  
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king  
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd—  
But to be won by force—and many men  
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.  
And these were the conditions of the king:  
That save he won the first by force, he needs  
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,  
A red-faced bride who know herself so vile  
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,  
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—  
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.  
And one—they call'd her Fame; and one—O mother,  
How can ye keep me tether'd to you?—Shame.'

100

110

Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.  
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,  
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—  
Else, wherefore born?’

To whom the mother said:

‘Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,  
Or will not deem him, wholly proven king—  
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King  
When I was frequent with him in my youth,  
And heard him kingly speak, and doubted him  
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,  
Of closest kin to me. Yet—wilt thou leave  
Thine easeful bidding here, and risk thine all,  
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven king?  
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth  
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.’

120

And Gareth answer'd quickly: ‘Not an hour,  
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro’ fire,  
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.  
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome  
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd  
The idolaters, and made the people free?  
Who should be king save him who makes us free?’

134

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
She answer'd craftily: ‘Will ye walk thro’ fire?  
Who walks thro’ fire will hardly heed the smoke.  
Ay, go then, an ye must; only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother,—I demand.’

And Gareth cried:

‘A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!’

But slowly spake the mother looking at him:  
‘Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.’

150

For so the Queen believed that when her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud  
To pass thereby: so should he rest with her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

160

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:  
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,  
And, since thou art my mother, must obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself  
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knives;  
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,  
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour  
When, waken'd by the wind which with full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The birds made  
Melody on branch and melody in mid air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,  
And the live green had kindled into flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,  
That rose between the forest and the field.  
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;  
At times the spires and turrets half-way down  
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below;  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

190

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,  
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord;  
Here is a city of enchanters, built  
By fairy kings.' The second echo'd him,



'Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home  
To northward, that this king is not the King,  
But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first again,  
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
But all a vision.'

200

Gareth answer'd them  
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow  
In his own blood, his pryncedom, youth, and hopes,  
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;  
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.  
And there was no gate like it under heaven.  
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her dress  
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;  
But like the cross her great and goodly arms  
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld.  
And drops of water fell from either hand;  
And down from one a sword was hung, from one  
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;  
And in the space to left of her, and right,  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately that men  
Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
High on the top were those three queens, the friends  
Or Arthur, who should help him at his need.

210

220

Then those with Gareth for so long a space  
Stared at the figures that at last it seem'd  
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings  
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl. They call'd  
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

230

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes  
So long that even to him they seem'd to move.  
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
Back from the gate started the three, to whom  
From out thereunder came an ancient man,  
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the soil,  
Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
The glories of our King; but these, my men,—

240

Your city moved so weirdly in the mist—  
 Doubt if the King be king at all, or come  
 From Fairyland; and whether this be built  
 By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;  
 Or whether there be any city at all,  
 Or all a vision: and this music now  
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer, playing on him  
 And saying: 'Son, I have seen the good ship sail  
 Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens, 250  
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;  
 And here is truth, but an it please thee not,  
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.  
 For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king  
 And fairy queens have built the city, son;  
 They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft  
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,  
 And built it to the music of their harps.  
 And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son  
 For there is nothing in it as it seems 260  
 Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold  
 The King a shadow, and the city real.  
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass  
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become  
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the King  
 Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame  
 A man should not be bound by, yet the which  
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,  
 Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide  
 Without, among the cattle of the field.  
 For an ye heard a music, like enow  
 They are building still, seeing the city is built  
 To music, therefore never built at all,  
 And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake  
 Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence thine own beard  
 That looks as white as utter truth, and seems  
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!  
 Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been  
 To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:  
 'Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards: 280  
 "Confusion and illusion, and relation,  
 Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?  
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,

And all that see thee, for thou art not who  
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.  
And now thou goest up to mock the King,  
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
Turned to the right, and past along the plain;  
Whom Gareth looking after said: 'My men,  
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.  
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I.  
Well, we will make amends.'

290

With all good cheer  
Hespahe and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain  
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
And stately, rich in emblem and the work  
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;  
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,  
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere,  
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak  
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.  
And ever and anon a knight would pass  
Outward, or inward to the hall; his arms  
Clash'd, and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.  
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced  
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;  
And all about a healthful people stept  
As in the presence of a gracious king.

300

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall  
The splendor of the presence of the King  
Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd no more—  
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,  
And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie  
The truthful King will doom me when I speak.'  
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
Of those tall knights that ranged about the throne  
Clear honor shining like the dewy star  
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure  
Affection, and the light of victory,  
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

310

320

Then came a widow crying to the King:  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft  
 From my dead lord a field with violence;  
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us of it  
 Perforce and left us neither gold nor field.'

339

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold or field?'  
 To whom the women weeping, 'Nay, my lord,  
 The field was pleasant in my husband's eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant field again,  
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,  
 According to the years. No boon is here,  
 But justice, so thy say be proven true.  
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did  
 Would shape himself a right!'

340

And while she past,  
 Came yet another widow crying to him:  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.  
 With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,  
 A knight of Uther in the barons' war,  
 When Lot and many another rose and fought  
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.  
 I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.  
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son  
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead,  
 And standeth seized of that inheritance  
 Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.  
 So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
 Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,  
 Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son.'

350

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,  
 'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.  
 Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,  
 'A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant her none,  
 This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall—  
 None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help the wrong'd  
 Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.  
 Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!  
 The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames;

Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,  
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get thee hence—  
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old  
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,  
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,  
According to the justice of the King.  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die.'

370

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,  
A name of evil savor in the land,  
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore  
What dazzl'd all, and shone far-off as shines  
A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,  
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,  
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;  
For having heard that Arthur of his grace  
Had made his goodly cousin Tristram knight,  
And, for himself was of the greater state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honor all the more;  
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,  
In token of true heart and fealty.

380

390

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend  
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The goodly knight!  
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?'  
For, midway down the side of that long hall,  
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,  
There ran a treble range of stony shields,—  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.  
And under every shield a knight was named.  
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:  
When some good knight had done one noble deed,  
His arms were carven only; but if twain,  
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,  
The shield was blank and bare, without a sign  
Saving the name beneath. And Gareth saw  
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,  
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried  
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

400

'More like are we to reave him of his crown  
 Than make him knight because men call him king.  
 The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands  
 From war among themselves, but left them kings;  
 Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd  
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.  
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,  
 As Mark would sully the low state of churl;  
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,  
 Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,  
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,  
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,  
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—  
 No fault of thine; let Kay the seneschal  
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—  
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying came  
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,  
 And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
 Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,  
 Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,  
 'A boon, Sir King,'—his voice was all ashamed,—  
 'For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn  
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve  
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves  
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.  
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King:

'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!  
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,  
 The master of the meats and drinks, be thine.'

440

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien  
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
 Root-bitten by white lichen:

'Lo ye now!

This fellow hath broken from some abbey, where,  
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,  
 However that might chance! but an he work,  
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
 And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

450

Then Lancelot standing near: 'Sir Seneschal,  
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;  
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know.  
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,  
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands  
 Large, fair, and fine!—Some young lad's mystery—  
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy  
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,  
 Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him.'

Then Kay: 'What murmurest thou of mystery?  
 Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?  
 Nay, for he spake too fool-like—mystery!  
 Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd  
 For horse and armor. Fair and fine, forsooth!  
 Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it  
 That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day  
 Undo thee not—and leave my man to me.'

460

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
 The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,  
 Ate with young lads his portion by the door,  
 And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knives.  
 And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,  
 But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,  
 Would hustle and harry him, and labor him  
 Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set  
 To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,  
 Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself  
 With all obedience to the King, and wrought  
 All kind of service with a noble ease  
 That graced the lowliest act in doing it.  
 And when the thralls had talk among themselves,  
 And one would praise the love that linkt the King  
 And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life  
 In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—  
 For Lancelot was the first in tournament,  
 But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—  
 Gareth was glad. Or if some other told  
 How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
 Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
 On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,  
 A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,  
 'He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
 He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'—  
 Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,  
 Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
 Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud

470

480

490

That first they mock'd, but, after, revered him.  
 Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale  
 Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling way  
 Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held  
 All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates  
 Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
 Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come  
 Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind  
 Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.  
 Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,  
 So there were any trial of mastery,  
 He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,  
 Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,  
 So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,  
 Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights  
 Clash like the coming and retiring wave,  
 And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy  
 Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

500

510

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;  
 But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,  
 Repentant of the word she made him swear,  
 And saddening in her childless castle, sent,  
 Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,  
 Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot  
 With whom he used to play at tourney once,  
 When both were children, and in lonely haunts  
 Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
 And each at either dash from either end—  
 Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.  
 He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke, at once  
 I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—  
 These news be mine, none other's—nay, the King's—  
 Descend into the city;' whereon he sought  
 The King alone, and found, and told him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt  
 For pastime; yea, he said it; joust can I.  
 Make me thy knight—in secret! let my name  
 Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I spring  
 Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye  
 Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow  
 Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:  
 'Son, the good mother let me know thee here,



And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.  
 Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows  
 Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
 And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
 And uttermost obedience to the King.'

540

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees:  
 'My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.  
 For uttermost obedience make demand  
 Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
 No mellow master of the meats and drinks!  
 And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
 But love I shall, God willing.'

550

And the King:  
 'Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,  
 Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
 And one with me in all, he needs must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,  
 Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King:  
 'But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?  
 Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,  
 And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,  
 Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:  
 'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?  
 Let be my name until I make my name!  
 My deeds will speak; it is but for a day.'  
 So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
 Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly  
 Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.  
 Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:  
 'I have given him the first quest; he is not proven.  
 Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,  
 Thou get to horse and follow him far away.  
 Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,  
 Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain.'

560

570

Then that same day there past into the hall  
 A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
 May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,  
 Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose  
 Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.  
 She into hall past with her page and cried:

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,  
 See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset  
 By bandits, every one that owns a tower  
 The lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?  
 Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,  
 Till even the lonest hold were all as free  
 From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-cloth  
 From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor mine  
 Rest; so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,  
 The wastest moorland of our realm shall be  
 Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.  
 What is thy name? thy need?'

590

'My name?' she said—  
 'Lynette, my name; noble; my need, a knight  
 To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
 A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
 And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.  
 She lives in Castle Perilous. A river  
 Runs in three loops about her living-place;  
 And o'er it are three passings, and three knights  
 Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,  
 And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay'd  
 In her own castle, and so besieges her  
 To break her will, and make her wed with him;  
 And but delays his purport till thou send  
 To do the battle with him thy chief man  
 Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow,  
 Then wed, with glory; but she will not wed  
 Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
 Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd:  
 'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush  
 All wrongers of the realm. But say, these four,  
 Who be they? What the fashion of the men?'

610

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
 The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
 Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;  
 Courteous or bestial from the moment, such  
 As have nor law nor king; and three of these  
 Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,  
 Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,  
 Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise  
 The fourth, who always rideth arm'd in black.'

A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.  
 He names himself the Night and oftener Death,  
 And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,  
 And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,  
 To show that who may slay or scape the three,  
 Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.  
 And all these four be fools, but mighty men,  
 And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,  
 A head with kindling eyes above the throng,  
 'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then—for he mark'd  
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—  
 'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,  
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,  
 And I can topple over a hundred such.  
 Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing at him,  
 Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough, sudden,  
 And pardonable, worthy to be knight—  
 Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

630

640

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath  
 Slew the may-white. She lifted either arm,  
 'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,  
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave.'  
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,  
 Fled down the lane of access to the King,  
 Took horse, descended the slope street, and past  
 The weird white gate, and paused without, beside  
 The field of tourney, murmuring, 'kitchen-knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,  
 At one end one that gave upon a range  
 Of level pavement where the King would pace  
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;  
 And down from this a lordly stairway sloped  
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;  
 And out by this main doorway past the King.  
 But one was counter to the hearth, and rose  
 High that the highest-crested helm could ride  
 Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry fled  
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to this  
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door  
 King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,  
 A war-horse of the best, and near it stood  
 The two that out of north had follow'd him.  
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held  
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed

650

660

A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,  
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,  
 And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire  
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those 670  
 Dull-coated things, that making slide apart  
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns  
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.  
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.  
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield  
 And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain  
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt  
 With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest  
 The people, while from out of kitchen came  
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd 680  
 Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,  
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,  
 'God bless the King, and all his fellowship!'  
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode  
 Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur  
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause  
 Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,  
 His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
 To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest  
 With horse and arms—the King hath past his time—  
 My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work again,  
 For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!  
 Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?  
 Begone!—my knave!—belike and like enow  
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth  
 So shook his wits they wander in his prime—  
 Crazy! How the villain lifted up his voice,  
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave!  
 Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,  
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.  
 Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn  
 Whether he know me for his master yet.  
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance  
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire—  
 Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,  
 Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said:  
 'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,  
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
 But ever meekly served the King in thee?  
 Abide; take counsel, for this lad is great  
 And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword.'  
 'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are overfine  
 To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies;'  
 Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
 Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
 Mutter'd the damsel: 'Wherefore did the King  
 Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least  
 He might have yielded to me one of those  
 Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
 Rather than—O sweet heaven! O, fie upon him!—  
 His kitchen-knave.'

720

To whom Sir Gareth drew—  
 And there were none but few goodlier than he—  
 Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.  
 Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one  
 That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,  
 And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,  
 Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender nose  
 With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, 'Hence!  
 Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-grease.  
 And look who comes behind;' for there was Kay.  
 'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.  
 We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,  
 'Master no more! too well I know thee, ay—  
 The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall.'  
 'Have at thee then,' said Kay; they shock'd, and Kay  
 Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,  
 'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

740

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
 Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
 Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
 Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?  
 Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more  
 Or love thee better, that by some device  
 Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,

Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—thou!—  
 Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—to me  
 Thou smellest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently, 'say  
 Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,  
 I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
 Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
 Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!  
 The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.  
 But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,  
 And then by such a one that thou for all  
 The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
 Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

760

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile  
 That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again  
 Down the long avenues of a boundless wood;  
 And Gareth following was again beknaved:

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way  
 Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;  
 The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves.  
 If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,  
 Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?  
 Fight, an thou canst; I have miss'd the only way.'

770

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong  
 Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;  
 Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,  
 Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines  
 A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
 To westward—in the deeps whereof a mere,  
 Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,  
 Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts  
 Ascended, and there brake a servingman  
 Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,  
 'They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere.'  
 Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the wrong'd,  
 But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.'  
 And when the damsel spake contemptuously,  
 'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,  
 'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines  
 He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd nigh the mere,  
 And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,  
 Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,

780

790

A stone about his neck to drown him in it.  
 Three with good blows he quieted, but three  
 Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone  
 From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
 Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.  
 Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet  
 Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues  
 Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs  
 To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
 To catch my thief, and then like vermin here  
 Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;  
 And under this wan water many of them  
 Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
 And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
 Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life  
 Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.  
 And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.  
 What guerdon will ye?'

809

Gareth sharply spake:  
 'None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,  
 In uttermost obedience to the King.  
 But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage?'

810

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well believe  
 You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh  
 Broke from Lynette: 'Ay, truly of a truth,  
 And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—  
 But deem not I accept thee aught the more,  
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
 A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.  
 Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.  
 But an this lord will yield us harborage,  
 Well.'

826

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,  
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
 His towers, where that day a feast had been  
 Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
 And many a costly cate, received the three.  
 And there they placed a peacock in his pride  
 Before the damsel, and the baron set  
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

830

‘Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,  
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.  
 Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur’s hall,  
 And pray’d the King would grant me Lancelot  
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—  
 The last a monster unsubduable  
 Of any save of him for whom I call’d—  
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,  
 “The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,  
 And mighty thro’ thy meats and drinks am I.”  
 Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
 “Go therefore,” and so gives the quest to him—  
 Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine  
 Than ride abroad redressing women’s wrong,  
 Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.’

840

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord  
 Now look’d at one and now at other, left  
 The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
 And, seating Gareth at another board,  
 Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

850

‘Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,  
 Or whether it be the maiden’s fantasy,  
 And whether she be mad, or else the King,  
 Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
 I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,  
 For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,  
 And saver of my life; and therefore now,  
 For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh  
 Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back  
 To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
 Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,  
 The saver of my life.’

860

And Gareth said,  
 ‘Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
 Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.’

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved  
 Had, some brief space, convey’d them on their way  
 And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,  
 ‘Lead, and I follow.’ Haughtily she replied:

‘I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour.  
 Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
 In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks  
 Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?’

870



For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee; then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:  
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

880

Then to the shore of one of those long loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream  
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap; and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above,  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.  
And therefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,  
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall,  
For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,' she said,  
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here  
His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thyself.  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave.'

890

900

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield  
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,  
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him shone,  
Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Wherefore stare ye so?  
Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet is time;  
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.'

920

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.  
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;  
But truly foul are better, for they send  
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know  
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge:  
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.  
For this were shame to do him further wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse  
And arms, and so return him to the King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.  
Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!  
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'  
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear  
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand  
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,  
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'  
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

940

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life; I yield.'  
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'  
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion! I of thee?  
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!  
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced  
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,  
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,

Thy life is thine at her command. Arise  
 And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say  
 His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave  
 His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.  
 Myself when I return will plead for thee.  
 Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,  
 Lead, and I follow.'

960

And fast away she fled;  
 Then when he came upon her, spake: 'Methought,  
 Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge,  
 The savor of thy kitchen came upon me  
 A little faintlier; but the wind hath changed,  
 I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,  
 '“O morning star”—not that tall felon there  
 Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness  
 Or some device, hast foully overthrown,—

970

“O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
 O star, my morning dream hath proven true,  
 Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.”

'But thou begone, take counsel, and away,  
 For hard by here is one that guards a ford—  
 The second brother in their fool's parable—  
 Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.  
 Care not for shame; thou art not knight but knave.'

980

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly:  
 'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.  
 When I was kitchen-knave among the rest,  
 Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates  
 Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,  
 “Guard it,” and there was none to meddle with it.  
 And such a coat art thou, and thee the King  
 Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
 To worry, and not to flee—and—knight or knave—  
 The knave that doth thee service as full knight  
 Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
 Toward thy sister's freeing.'

990

Ay, Sir Knave!  
 Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,  
 Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,  
 That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,  
 Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
 Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun  
 Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower  
 That blows a globe of after arrowlets  
 Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,  
 All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots  
 Before them when he turn'd from watching him.  
 He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,  
 'What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?'  
 And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,  
 'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall  
 Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'  
 'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a red  
 And cipher face of rounded foolishness,  
 Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,  
 Whom Gareth met mid-stream; no room was there  
 For lance or tourney-skill. Four strokes they struck  
 With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight  
 Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun  
 Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,  
 The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream  
 Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

1000

1010

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;  
 So drew him home; but he that fought no more,  
 As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
 Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the King.  
 'Myself when I return will plead for thee.  
 Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
 'Hath not the good wind, damsel changed again?'  
 'Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor here.  
 There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;  
 His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

1030

'“O sun”—not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,  
 Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness—

'“O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,  
 O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
 Shine sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me.”

'What knowest thou of love-song or of love?  
 Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,  
 Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

'“O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
 O dewy flowers that close when day is done,  
 Blow sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me.”

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,  
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,  
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round  
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?  
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

'O birds that warble to the morning sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly; twice my love hath smiled on me."

1050

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,  
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth  
May-music growing with the growing light,  
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare—  
So runs thy fancy—these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have not now  
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.  
There stands the third fool of their allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,  
All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight  
That named himself the Star of Evening stood.

1060

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the madman there  
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,  
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins  
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave  
His armor off him, these will turn the blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,  
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?  
Thy ward is higher up; but have ye slain  
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel cried:

1070

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
For both thy younger brethren have gone down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star.  
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys.'  
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag!  
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star  
Can throw the Evening.'

1080

Then that other blew

A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
 'Approach and arm me.' With slow steps from out  
 An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd  
 Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
 And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm  
 With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
 And gave a shield whereon the star of even  
 Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone. 1090  
 But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,  
 They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;  
 And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,  
 There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,  
 But up like fire he started; and as oft  
 As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,  
 So many a time he vaulted up again;  
 Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,  
 Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
 Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one 1100  
 That all in later, sadder age begins  
 To war against ill uses of a life,  
 But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
 'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!'  
 He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike  
 Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,  
 'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave—  
 O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—  
 Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied—  
 Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round— 1110  
 His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin—  
 Strike—strike—the wind will never change again.'  
 And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,  
 And hew'd great pieces of his armor off him,  
 But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,  
 And could not wholly bring him under, more  
 Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,  
 The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs  
 For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand  
 Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt. 1120  
 'I have thee now;' but forth that other sprang,  
 And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms  
 Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
 Strangled, but straining even his uttermost  
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge  
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,  
 'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said:

'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,  
O rainbow with three colors after rain,  
Shine sweetly; thrice my love hath smiled on me."

1130

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added—Knight,  
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—  
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought the King  
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,  
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal  
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what thou art.'

1140

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to blame,  
Saying that you mistrusted our good King  
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one  
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;  
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold  
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet  
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.  
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me;  
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks  
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,  
Hath force to quell me.'

1150

Nigh upon that hour  
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,  
Lets down his other leg, and stretching dreams  
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,  
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine  
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

1160

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
Where slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse  
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.  
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,  
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock  
The war of Time against the soul of man.  
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory

From these damp walls, and taken but the form.  
 Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and read—  
 In letters like to those the vexillary  
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—  
 'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,'—'HESPERUS'—  
 'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures, armed men,  
 Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
 And running down the Soul, a shape that fled  
 With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose hair,  
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
 'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
 Who comes behind?'

1170

1180

For one—delay'd at first  
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,  
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood—  
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—  
 His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the star  
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,  
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend.'  
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;  
 But when they closed—in a moment—at one touch  
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world—  
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
 That when he found the grass within his hands  
 He laughed. The laughter jarr'd upon Lynette.  
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and overthrown,  
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?'  
 'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,  
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom  
 I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—  
 Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
 Out, sword; we are thrown!' And Lancelot answer'd: 'Prince,  
 O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness  
 Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,  
 Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole  
 As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

1200

Then Gareth: 'Thou—Lancelot!—thine the hand  
 That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast  
 Thy brethren of thee make—which could not chance—  
 Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,  
 Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!'

1210



Whereat the maiden, petulant: 'Lancelot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now  
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,  
Who being still rebuked would answer still  
Courteous as any knight—but now, if knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon;  
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.  
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,  
I hate thee and forever.'

1220

And Lancelot said:  
'Bless'd be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou  
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise,  
To call him shamed who is but overthrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
And overthrower from being overthrown.  
With sword we have not striven, and thy good horse  
And thou are weary; yet not less I felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.  
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,  
And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,  
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,  
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round!'

1230

And then when turning to Lynette he told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:  
'Ay, well—ay, well—for worse than being fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks  
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.  
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
Seek, till we find.' And when they sought and found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed:  
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.  
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him  
As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her child,  
And vexed his day, but blesses him asleep—  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!  
O Lancelot, Lancelot,'—and she clapt her hands—  
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave

1240

Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,  
 Else yon black felon had not let me pass,  
 To bring thee back to do the battle with him.  
 Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;  
 Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave  
 Miss the full flower of this accomplishment.'

1260

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he you name  
 May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,  
 Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,  
 Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well  
 As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she said,  
 'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

1270

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield:  
 'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears  
 Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!  
 Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord!—  
 Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.  
 O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
 Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will not shame  
 Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.  
 Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field  
 They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' summer-wan,  
 In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
 The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.  
 A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe falls!'  
 An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing there!'  
 Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
 Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying:  
 'Yield, yield him this again; 't is he must fight:  
 I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday  
 Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now  
 To lend thee horse and shield. Wonders ye have done,  
 Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory enow  
 In having flung the three. I see thee maim'd,  
 Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling the fourth.'

1280

1290

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.  
 You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,  
 Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
 Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,  
 'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
 Seeing he never rides abroad by day,

1300

But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass  
Chilling the night; nor have I heard the voice.  
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported him  
As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad, and girl—yea, the soft babe!  
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,  
Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot first,  
The quest is Lancelot's; give him back the shield.'

1310

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for this,  
Belike he wins it as the better man;  
Thus—and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged  
All the devisings of their chivalry  
When one might meet a mightier than himself;  
How best to manage horse, lance, sword, and shield,  
And so fill up the gap where force might fail  
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I know but one—  
To dash against mine enemy and to win.  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,  
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee!' sigh'd Lynette.

1320

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew  
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode  
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, 'There.'  
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd  
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,  
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn  
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,  
And so, before the two could hinder him,  
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.  
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon  
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;  
Whereon were hollow trappings up and down  
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;  
Till high above him, circled with her maids,  
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
White hands and courtesy. But when the prince  
Three times had blown—after long hush—at last—  
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,

1336

1340

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.  
High on a night-black horse, in night-black arms,  
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,  
And crown'd with fleshless laughter—some ten steps—  
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced  
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

1356

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:  
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,  
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,  
But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,  
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers  
As if for pity?' But he spake no word;  
Which set the horror higher. A maiden swoon'd;  
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,  
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;  
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;  
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt  
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

1366

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,  
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.  
Then those that did not blink the terror saw  
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.  
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.  
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm  
As throughly as the skull; and out from this  
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, 'Knight,  
Slay me not; my three brethren bade me do it,  
To make a horror all about the house,  
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.  
They never dream'd the passes would be past.'  
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair child,  
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight  
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bade me do it.  
They hate the King and Lancelot, the King's friend;  
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,  
They never dream'd the passes could be past.'

1376

1380

Then sprang the happier day from underground;  
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance  
And revel and song, made merry over Death,  
As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.  
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the quest.

1390

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he that told it later says Lynette.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her as he loved the light of heaven.  
And as the light of heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
To make her beauty vary day by day,  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
Who first had found and loved her in a state  
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen herself,  
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
Loved her, and often with her own white hands  
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
But when a rumor rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell  
A horror on him lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd or should suffer any taint  
In nature. Wherefore, going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his principedom lay  
Close on the borders of a territory  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law;  
And therefore, till the King himself should please

10

To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,  
He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches. And the King  
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land;  
Where, thinking that, if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes;  
This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more;  
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy,  
While he, that watch'd her sadden, was the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn—  
They sleeping each by either—the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his throat,  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and, bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone?  
I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they say. 90  
And yet I hate that he should linger here;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mightful hand striking great blows  
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,  
Than that my lord thro' me should suffer shame.  
Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine eyes,  
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife!'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mischance  
He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, 'In spite of all my care,  
For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,  
She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall.'  
Then, tho' he loved and revered her too much  
To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang  
That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,  
'My charger and her palfrey;' then to her,  
'I will ride forth into the wilderness,  
For, tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fallen so low as some would wish.  
And thou, put on thy worst and meanest dress  
And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,  
'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'

But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'  
 Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
 Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
 With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,  
 She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
 Remembering when first he came on her  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
 And all his journey to her, as himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the court.

140

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
 Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
 Before him came a forester of Dean,  
 Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
 Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
 First seen that day; these things he told the King.  
 Then the good King gave order to let blow  
 His horns for hunting on the morrow morn,  
 And when the Queen petition'd for his leave  
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
 So with the morning all the court were gone.  
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love  
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt,  
 But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood;  
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
 Waiting to hear the hounds, but heard instead  
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
 Nor weapon save a golden-hilted brand,  
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford  
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
 There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
 In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
 Low bow'd the tributary prince, and she,  
 Sweetly and stateily, and with all grace  
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him:  
 'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later than we!'  
 'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and so late  
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,

150

160

170



Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,' she said;  
 'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
 There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds:  
 Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
 King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode  
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;  
 Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
 Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
 In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent  
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf,  
 Who being vicious, old, and irritable,  
 And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
 Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
 'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
 'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried the dwarf;  
 'Thou art not worthy even to speak of him;'  
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
 Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'  
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,  
 Who answer'd as before; and when the prince  
 Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,  
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.  
 The prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:  
 But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
 And pure nobility of temperament,  
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd  
 From even a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
 Done in your maiden's person to yourself,  
 And I will track this vermin to their earths;  
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
 To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,  
 Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,  
 And on the third day will again be here,  
 So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

Farewell, fair prince,' answer'd the stately Queen.  
 'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;  
 And may you light on all things that you love,  
 And live to wed with her whom first you love.  
 But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,  
 And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
 Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

230

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard  
 The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade  
 And valley, with fixt eye following the three.  
 At last they issued from the world of wood,  
 And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
 And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.  
 And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
 Beheld the long street of a little town  
 In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
 White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose;  
 And on one side a castle in decay,  
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine.  
 And out of town and valley came a noise  
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks  
 At distance, ere they settle for the night.

240

250

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.  
 'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him to his earth.'  
 And down the long street riding wearily,  
 Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
 And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
 His master's armor; and of such a one  
 He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the town?'  
 Who told him, scouring still, 'The sparrow-hawk!'  
 Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
 Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
 Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?  
 Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk!'  
 Then riding further past an armorer's,  
 Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,  
 Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
 He put the selfsame query, but the man

Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:  
 'Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk  
 Has little time for idle questioners.'  
 Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:  
 'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!  
 Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!  
 Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
 The murmur of the world! What is it to me?  
 O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
 Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!  
 Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,  
 Where can I get me harborage for the night?  
 And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'  
 Whereat the armorer turning all amazed  
 And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
 Came forward with the helmet yet in hand  
 And answer'd: 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;  
 We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
 And there is scanty time for half the work.  
 Arms? truth! I know not; all are wanted here.  
 Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,  
 It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
 Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

280

290

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
 Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.  
 There musing sat the hoary-headed earl—  
 His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
 Once fit for feasts of ceremony—and said:  
 'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,  
 'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'  
 Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
 The slender entertainment of a house  
 Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'  
 'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;  
 'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks  
 For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
 With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'  
 Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed earl,  
 And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine  
 To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk.  
 But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,  
 We will not touch upon him even in jest.'

300

310

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
 His charger trampling many a prickly star  
 Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
 He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.

Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;  
 And here had fallen a great part of a tower,  
 Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,  
 And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;  
 And high above a piece of turret stair,  
 Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
 Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
 Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,  
 And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd  
 A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

320

And while he waited in the castle court,  
 The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
 Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
 Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
 Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
 Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
 That sings so delicately clear, and make  
 Conjecture of the plumage and the form,  
 So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint,  
 And made him like a man abroad at morn  
 When first the liquid note beloved of men  
 Comes flying over many a windy wave  
 To Britain, and in April suddenly  
 Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,  
 And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
 Or it may be the labor of his hands,  
 To think or say, 'There is the nightingale.'  
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,  
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'

330

340

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one  
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and lower the proud;  
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;  
 With that wild wheel we go not up or down;  
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;  
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;  
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;  
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;  
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn the nest,'  
Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Entering then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,  
'Here, by God's rood, is the one maid for me.'  
But none spake word except the hoary earl:  
'Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine;  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.'

370

He spake; the prince, as Enid past him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said, 'Forbear!  
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my son,  
Endures not that her guest should serve himself.'  
And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forebore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall,  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the prince and earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth that, following with a costrel, bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them cheer,  
And, in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And, seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down.  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall;  
Then suddenly address the hoary earl:

380

'Fair host and earl, I pray your courtesy;  
 This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me of him.  
 His name? but no, good faith, I will not have it;  
 For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
 Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
 White from the mason's hand, then have I sworn  
 From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint  
 Of Devon—for this morning when the Queen  
 Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
 His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
 Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore  
 That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
 And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.  
 And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to find  
 Arms in your town, where all the men are mad;  
 They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
 For the great wave that echoes round the world.  
 They would not hear me speak; but if ye know  
 Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
 Should have them, tell me, seeing I have sworn  
 That I will break his pride and learn his name,  
 Avenging this great insult done the Queen.'

410

420

Then cried Earl Yniol: 'Art thou he indeed,  
 Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
 For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
 I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
 Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your state  
 And presence might have guess'd you one of those  
 That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
 Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;  
 For this dear child hath often heard me praise  
 Your feats of arms, and often when I paused  
 Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear;  
 So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
 To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong.  
 O, never yet had woman such a pair  
 Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,  
 A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
 Drunk even when he woo'd; and be he dead  
 I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
 The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,  
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name  
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
 When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
 Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;  
 And since the proud man often is the mean,

430

440



He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
 Affirming that his father left him gold,  
 And in my charge, which was not render'd to him;  
 Bribed with large promises the men who served  
 About my person, the more easily  
 Because my means were somewhat broken into  
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;  
 Raised my own town against me in the night  
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house;  
 From mine own earldom foully ousted me;  
 Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
 For truly there are those who love me yet;  
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
 Where doubtless he would put me soon to death  
 But that his pride too much despises me.  
 And I myself sometimes despise myself;  
 For I have let men be and have their way,  
 Am much too gentle, have not used my power;  
 Nor know I whether I be very base  
 Or very manful, whether very wise  
 Or very foolish; only this I know,  
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
 But can endure it all most patiently.'

466

479

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint, 'but arms,  
 That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew, fight  
 In next day's tourney I may break his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd: 'Arms, indeed, but old  
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
 Are mine, and therefore, at thine asking, thine.  
 But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
 Except the lady he loves best be there.  
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,  
 And over these is placed a silver wand,  
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
 The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
 And this, what knight soever be in field  
 Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
 And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,  
 Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
 Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
 And toppling over all antagonism  
 Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.  
 But thou, that hast no lady, canst not fight.'

488

493

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,  
 Leaping a little toward him: 'Thy leave!  
 Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
 For this dear child, because I never saw,  
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
 Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
 And if I fall her name will yet remain  
 Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,  
 So aid me heaven when at mine uttermost  
 As I will make her truly my true wife!'

500

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
 And looking round he saw not Enid there—  
 Who hearing her own name had stol'n away—  
 But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
 And fondling all her hand in his he said:  
 'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
 And best by her that bore her understood.  
 Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest,  
 Tell her, and prove her heart toward the prince.'

510

So spake the kindly-hearted earl, and she  
 With frequent smile and nod departing fount,  
 Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;  
 Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then  
 On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
 And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
 And told her all their converse in the hall,  
 Proving her heart. But never light and shade  
 Coursed one another more on open ground  
 Beneath a troubled heaven than red and pale  
 Across the face of Enid hearing her;  
 While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
 When weight is added only grain by grain,  
 Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast;  
 Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
 Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it.  
 So moving without answer to her rest  
 She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
 The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
 Contemplating her own unworthiness;  
 And when the pale and bloodless east began  
 To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
 Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved  
 Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,  
 And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

530



And thither came the twain, and when Geraint  
 Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
 He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
 Himself beyond the rest pushing could move  
 The Chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
 Were on his princely person, but thro' these  
 Prince-like his bearing shone; and errant knights  
 And ladies came, and by and by the town  
 Flow'd in and settling circled all the lists.  
 And there they fixt the forks into the ground,  
 And over these they placed the silver wand,  
 And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.

550

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
 Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,  
 'Advance and take, the fairest of the fair,  
 What I these two years past have won for thee,  
 The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the prince,  
 'Forbear; there is a worthier,' and the knight  
 With some surprise and thrice as much disdain  
 Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face  
 Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
 So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
 'Do battle for it then,' no more; and thrice  
 They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.  
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
 So often and with such blows that all the crowd  
 Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls  
 There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
 So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still  
 The dew of their great labor and the blood  
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.  
 But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,  
 'Remember that great insult done the Queen,'  
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,  
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,  
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
 And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the fallen man  
 Made answer, groaning: 'Edyrn, son of Nudd!  
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
 My pride is broken; men have seen my fall.'  
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied Geraint,  
 'These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.  
 First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court and, coming there,  
 Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,  
 And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.  
 These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die.'

And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will I do,  
 For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride  
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!'  
 And rising up he rode to Arthur's court,  
 And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
 And, being young, he changed and came to loathe  
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself  
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell at last  
 In the great battle fighting for the King.

590

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
 Made a low splendor in the world, and wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
 Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her promise given  
 No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
 He would not leave her till her promise given—  
 To ride with him this morning to the court,  
 And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
 And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk;  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she said:

600

610

'This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him!  
 Would he could tarry with us here awhile,  
 But being so beholden to the prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
 To seek a second favor at his hands.  
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
 Myself would work eye dim and finger lame  
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

620

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift

630

Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house  
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds;  
For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought them bread.  
And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,  
And placed them in this ruin; and she wish'd  
The prince had found her in her ancient home;  
Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew;  
And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again,  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool.  
But this was in the garden of a king,  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool she knew  
That all was bright; that all about were birds  
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;  
And lords and ladies of the high court went  
In silver tissue talking things of state;  
And children of the King in cloth of gold  
Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks.  
And while she thought, 'They will not see me,' came  
A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,  
And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at all  
Let them be gold; and charge the gardeners now  
To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die.'  
And therewithal one came and seized on her,  
And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadowed by the foolish dream,  
And lo! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake; and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly:

640

660

67\*

'See here, my child, how fresh the colors look,  
How fast they hold, like colors of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the wave.  
Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow:  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know it.'

680

And Enid look'd, but, all confused at first,  
Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream.  
Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it; your good gift,  
So sadly lost on that unhappy night;  
Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,' said the dame,  
'And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and everywhere  
He found the sack and plunder of our house  
All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town,  
And gave command that all which once was ours  
Should now be ours again; and yester-eve,  
While ye were talking sweetly with your prince,  
Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favor of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?  
For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,  
And, howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all  
That appertains to noble maintenance.  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;  
But since our fortune swerved from sun to shade,  
And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has come.  
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a prince's bride;  
For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
And should some great court-lady say, the prince  
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
And like a madman brought her to the court,  
Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might shame the prince

700

710

To whom we are beholden; but I know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho' they sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match.'

730

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath,  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star of morn  
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
 And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand and eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and said  
 She never yet had seen her half so fair;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first  
 Invaded Britain: 'But we beat him back,  
 As this great prince invaded us, and we,  
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.  
 And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
 For old am I, and rough the ways and wild;  
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
 I see my princess as I see her now,  
 Clothed with my gift and gay among the gay.'

740

But while the women thus rejoiced, Geraint  
 Woke where he slept in the high hall, and call'd  
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
 Of that good mother making Enid gay  
 In such apparel as might well beseem  
 His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my love,  
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
 That she ride with me in her faded silk.'  
 Yniol with that hard message went; it fell  
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn;  
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,  
 But silently, in all obedience,  
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd gift,  
 And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
 More than Geraint to greet her thus attired;

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And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
 But rested with her sweet face satisfied;  
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
 Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said:

'O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved  
 At thy new son, for my petition to her.  
 When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,  
 In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet,  
 Made promise that, whatever bride I brought,  
 Herself would clothe her like the sun in heaven.  
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,  
 Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
 I vow'd that, could I gain her, our fair Queen,  
 No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst  
 Unlike from cloud—and likewise thought perhaps,  
 That service done so graciously would bind  
 The two together; fain I would the two  
 Should love each other. How can Enid find  
 A nobler friend? Another thought was mine:  
 I came among you here so suddenly  
 That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
 Might well have served for proof that I was loved,  
 I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
 Or easy nature, might not let itself  
 Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;  
 Or whether some false sense in her own self  
 Of my contrasting brightness overbore  
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall,  
 And such a sense might make her long for court  
 And all its perilous glories; and I thought,  
 That could I somehow prove such force in her  
 Link'd with such love for me that at a word,  
 No reason given her, she could cast aside  
 A splendor dear to women, new to her,  
 And therefore dearer; or if not so new,  
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt  
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,  
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
 That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
 Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts;  
 And for my strange petition I will make  
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
 When your fair child shall wear your costly gift

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810

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,  
Who knows? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you thanks.'

He spoke; the mother smiled, but half in tears,  
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it,  
And clasp'd and kiss'd her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come;  
And then descending met them at the gates,  
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honor as the prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun;  
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,  
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,' she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

## GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a lifelong trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Grooping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth  
That morning, when they both had got to horse,

Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:  
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,  
Ever a good way on before; and this  
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,  
When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.  
So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire  
Chafing his shoulder. Then he cried again,  
'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down the tracks  
Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode.  
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon.  
A stranger meeting them had surely thought,  
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.  
For he was ever saying to himself,  
'O, I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her true'—  
And there he broke the sentence in his heart  
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it when his passion masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet heavens  
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.  
And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself  
Which made him look so cloudy and so cold;  
Till the great plover's human whistle amazed  
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambuscade;  
Then thought again, 'If there be such in me,  
I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,  
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights



On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock  
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all;  
And heard one crying to his fellow, 'Look,  
Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound;  
Come, we will slay him and will have his horse  
And armor, and his damsel shall be ours.'

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Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said:  
'I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said:  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast  
That they would slay you, and possess your horse  
And armor, and your damsel should be theirs.'

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He made a wrathful answer: 'Did I wish  
Your warning or your silence? one command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look—for now,  
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost.'

80

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint  
Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his breast  
And out beyond; and then against his brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting, like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,  
Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born  
The three gay suits of armor which they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armor on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you;' and she drove them thro' the waste.

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He follow'd nearer; ruth began to work  
 Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
 The being he loved best in all the world,  
 With difficulty in mild obedience  
 Driving them on. He fain had spoken to her,  
 And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath  
 And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within;  
 But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
 At once without remorse to strike her dead  
 Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own bright face  
 Accuse her of the least immodesty:  
 And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more  
 That she *could* speak whom his own ear had heard  
 Call herself false, and suffering thus he made  
 Minutes an age; but in scarce longer time  
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
 In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,  
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,  
 And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a prize!  
 Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,  
 And all in charge of whom? a girl! set on.'  
 'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a knight.'  
 The third, 'A craven; how he hangs his head!'  
 The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but one?  
 Wait here, and when he passes fall upon him!'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said:  
 'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their villainy.  
 My lord is weary with the fight before,  
 And they will fall upon him unawares.  
 I needs must disobey him for his good;  
 How should I dare obey him to his harm?  
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,  
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to him  
 With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to speak?'  
 He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she spoke:

'There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,  
 And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
 That they will fall upon you while ye pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful answer back:  
 'And if there were an hundred in the wood,  
 And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
 And all at once should sally out upon me,  
 I swear it would not rufle me so much  
 As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
 And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
 Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe  
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.  
 And he she dreaded most bare down upon him.  
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but Geraint's,  
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet home,  
 And then brake short, and down his enemy roll'd,  
 And there lay still; as he that tells the tale  
 Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,  
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew;  
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
 Of comrades making slower at the prince,  
 When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood;  
 On whom the victor, to confound them more,  
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as one,  
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
 The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
 And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd  
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
 Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the lance  
 That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves 180  
 Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,  
 And bound them on their horses, each on each,  
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
 Before you,' and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still. The pain she had  
 To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
 Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
 Together, served a little to disedge  
 The sharpness of that pain about her heart;

And they themselves, like creatures gently born  
 But into bad hands fallen, and now so long  
 By handits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt  
 Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,  
 And issuing under open heavens beheld  
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased  
 In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it;  
 And down a rocky pathway from the place 200  
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand  
 Bare victual for the mowers; and Geraint  
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale.  
 Then, moving downward to the meadow ground,  
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,  
 'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint.'  
 'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth; 'and thou,  
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
 And only meet for mowers;' then set down  
 His basket, and dismounting on the sward 210  
 They let the horses graze, and ate themselves.  
 And Enid took a little delicately,  
 Less having stomach for it than desire  
 To close with her lord's pleasure, but Geraint  
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
 And when he found all empty was amazed;  
 And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all, but take  
 A horse and arms for guerdon; choose the best.'  
 He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
 'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.' 220  
 'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried the prince.  
 'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
 'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,  
 While your good damsel rests, return and fetch  
 Fresh victual for these mowers of our earl;  
 For these are his, and all the field is his,  
 And I myself am his; and I will tell him  
 How great a man thou art. He loves to know  
 When men of mark are in his territory;  
 And he will have thee to his palace here, 230  
 And serve thee costlier than with mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint: 'I wish no better fare;  
 I never ate with angrier appetite  
 Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
 And into no earl's palace will I go.  
 I know, God knows, too much of palaces!

And if he want me, let him come to me.  
But hire us some fair chamber for the night,  
And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us know.'

240

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought himself a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the prince had brought his errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let them glance  
At Enid, where she droopt. His own false doom,  
That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he sigh'd;  
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd  
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe,  
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamor of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass  
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,  
And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they went;  
Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,  
Call for the woman of the house,' to which  
She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the two remain'd  
Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute  
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of birth,  
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield.

250

260

On a sudden, many a voice along the street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst  
Their drowse; and either started while the door,  
Push'd from without, drave backward to the wall,  
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Limours.  
He moving up with pliant courtliness  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt hand,  
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,

270

280

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer  
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously,  
According to his fashion, bade the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honor of their earl;  
'And care not for the cost; the cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours  
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told 290  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
And made it of two colors; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled him,  
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,' he said; 300  
'Get her to speak; she doth not speak to me.'  
Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,  
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,  
Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid, my early and my only love,  
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me wild—  
What chance is this? how is it I see you here?  
Ye are in my power at last, are in my power. 310  
Yet fear me not; I call mine own self wild,  
But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came between,  
In former days you saw me favorably.  
And if it were so do not keep it back.  
Make me a little happier; let me know it.  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?  
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.  
And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy, 320  
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or maid,  
To serve you—doth he love you as of old?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,  
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,  
Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
 Your story, that this man loves you no more.  
 Your beauty is no beauty to him now. 330  
 A common chance—right well I know it—pall'd—  
 For I know men; nor will ye win him back,  
 For the man's love once gone never returns.  
 But here is one who loves you as of old;  
 With more exceeding passion than of old.  
 Good, speak the word; my followers ring him round.  
 He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;  
 They understand. Nay, I do not mean blood;  
 Nor need ye look so scared at what I say.  
 My malice is no deeper than a moat, 340  
 No stronger than a wall. There is the keep;  
 He shall not cross us more; speak but the word.  
 Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me  
 The one true lover whom you ever own'd,  
 I will make use of all the power I have.  
 O, pardon me! the madness of that hour  
 When first I parted from thee moves me yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own voice  
 And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
 Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his eyes, 350  
 Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast,  
 And answer'd with such craft as women use,  
 Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
 That breaks upon them perilously, and said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
 And do not practise on me, come with morn,  
 And snatch me from him as by violence.  
 Leave me to-night; I am weary to the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume  
 Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous earl,  
 And the stout prince bade him a loud good-night.  
 He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
 How Enid never loved a man but him,  
 Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
 Debating his command of silence given,  
 And that she now perforce must violate it,  
 Held commune with herself, and while she held  
 He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
 To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased 370  
 To find him yet unwounded after fight,

And hear him breathing low and equally.  
 Anon she rose and, stepping lightly, heap'd  
 The pieces of his armor in one place,  
 All to be there against a sudden need;  
 Then dozed awhile herself, but, overtoil'd  
 By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
 Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then  
 Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
 And strongly striking out her limbs awoke; 380  
 Then thought she heard the wild earl at the door,  
 With all this rout of random followers,  
 Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her;  
 Which was the red cock shouting to the light,  
 As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world  
 And glimmer'd on his armor in the room.  
 And once again she rose to look at it,  
 But touch'd it unawares; jangling, the casque  
 Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
 Then breaking his command of silence given, 390  
 She told him all that Earl Limours had said,  
 Except the passage that he loved her not;  
 Nor left untold the craft herself had used,  
 But ended with apology so sweet,  
 Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd  
 So justified by that necessity,  
 That tho' he thought, 'Was it for him she wept  
 In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
 Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good fellows fools  
 And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring 400  
 Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out  
 Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
 And like a household spirit at the walls  
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd;  
 Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,  
 In silence, did him service as a squire;  
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,  
 'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he learnt it, 'Take  
 Five horses and their armors;' and the host,  
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze, 410  
 'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!'  
 'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the prince,  
 And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-day  
 I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
 What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
 Or fancy—tho' I count it of small use  
 To charge you—that ye speak not but obey.'



## GERAINT AND ENID

And Enid answer'd : 'Yea, my lord, I know  
Your wish and would obey; but, riding first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see.  
Then not to give you warning, that seems hard,  
Almost beyond me; yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it; be not too wise,  
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not all mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;  
And that within her which a wanton fool  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,  
Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower on. 440  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride  
More near by many a rood than yesternorn,  
It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint,  
Waving an angry hand as who should say,  
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then, not to disobey her lord's behest, 450  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thundercloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode, 460  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore

Down by the length of lance and arm beyond  
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the earl,  
And left him lying in the public way;  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,  
Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords and wildly fly,  
Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,' he said,  
'All of one mind and all right-honest friends!  
Not a hoof left! and I methinks till now  
Was honest—paid with horses and with arms;  
I cannot steal or plunder, no, nor beg.  
And so what say ye, shall we strip him there,  
Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armor? shall we fast or dine?  
No?—then do thou, being right honest, pray  
That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm;  
I too would still be honest.' Thus he said;  
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;  
So fared it with Geraint, who, being prick'd  
In combat with the followers of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armor secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet wagg'd;  
And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
The prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
 Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
 Dismounting loosed the fastenings of his arms,  
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
 Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,  
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear lord's life.  
 Then, after all was done that hand could do,  
 She rested, and her desolation came  
 Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

510

And many past, but none regarded her,  
 For in that realm of lawless turbulence  
 A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
 Was cared as much for as a summer shower.  
 One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him.  
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
 Rode on a mission to the bandit earl;  
 Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,  
 He drove the dust against her veiless eyes.  
 Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
 The long way smoke beneath him in his fear;  
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,  
 And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
 While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

520

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,  
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,  
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
 Came riding with a hundred lances up;  
 But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
 Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he dead?'  
 'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all haste.  
 'Would some of your kind people take him up,  
 And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?  
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

540

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be not dead,  
 Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a child.  
 And be he dead, I count you for a fool;  
 Your wailing will not quicken him; dead or not,  
 Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
 Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,  
 Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall.  
 An if he live, we will have him of our band;

550

And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one.'

He spake and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone  
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling; so the ruffians growl'd,  
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid,  
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded; laid him on it  
All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm—  
His gentle charger following him unled—  
And cast him and the bier in which he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,  
And their own earl, and their own souls, and her.  
They might as well have blest her; she was deaf  
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

560

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord  
There in the naked hall, propping his head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him,  
Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping his head,  
And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him;  
And felt the warm tears falling on his face,  
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps for me,'  
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,  
That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps for me.'

580

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.  
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise:  
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang  
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
And doff'd his helm; and then there flutter'd in,  
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen; and Earl Doorm

590

Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,  
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.  
 And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,  
 And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh.  
 And none spake word, but all sat down at once,  
 And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
 Feeding like horses when you hear them feed;  
 Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
 To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
 But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,  
 He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
 A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
 Then he remember'd her and how she wept,  
 And out of her there came a power upon him;  
 And rising on the sudden he said: 'Eat!  
 I never yet beheld a thing so pale.  
 God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.  
 Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,  
 For were I dead who is it would weep for me?  
 Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
 Have I beheld a lily like yourself.  
 And so there lived some color in your cheek,  
 There is not one among my gentlewomen  
 Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
 But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
 And I will do the thing I have not done,  
 For ye shall share my earldom with me, girl.  
 And we will live like two birds in one nest,  
 And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
 For I compel all creatures to my will.'

600

610

620

He spoke; the brawny spearman let his cheek  
 Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared;  
 While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn  
 Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf  
 And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear  
 What shall not be recorded—women they,  
 Women, or what had been those gracious things,  
 But now desired the humbling of their best,  
 Yea, would have help'd him to it; and all at once  
 They hated her, who took no thought of them,  
 But answer'd in low voice, her meek head yet  
 Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesy,  
 He being as he is, to let me be.'

630

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,  
 But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
 With what himself had done so graciously,

640

Assumed that she had thank'd him, adding, 'Yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge earl cried out upon her talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,  
And bare her by main violence to the board,  
And thrust the dish before her, crying, 'Eat.'

650

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not eat  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he answer'd. 'Here!'—  
And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to her,—  
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight or hot,  
God's curse, with anger—often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat;  
Drink therefore, and the wine will change your will.'

660

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I will not drink  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at last:  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning; yonder man is surely dead,  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wait for one  
Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus; cross me no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed.  
I love that beauty should go beautifully;  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully?  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this; obey.'

670

He spoke. and one among his gentlewomen  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,

Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
 Play'd into green, and thicker down the front  
 With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,  
 When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
 And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
 Strike where it clung; so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
 Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
 With lifelong injuries burning unavenged,  
 And now their hour has come; and Enid said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,  
 And loved me serving in my father's hall;  
 In this poor gown I rode with him to court,  
 And there the Queen array'd me like the sun;  
 In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,  
 When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
 Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd;  
 And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
 Until himself arise a living man,  
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough;  
 Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be.  
 I never loved, can never love but him.  
 Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
 He being as he is, to let me be.'

700

710

Then strode the brute earl up and down his hall,  
 And took his russet beard between his teeth;  
 Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood  
 Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
 Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;  
 Take my salute,' unknightly with flat hand,  
 However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
 And since she thought, 'He had not dared to do it,  
 Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
 Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
 As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
 Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

720

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,—  
 It lay beside him in the hollow shield,—  
 Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it  
 Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball  
 The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.  
 So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.  
 And all the men and women in the hall

780

Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled  
 Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
 Were left alone together, and he said:

‘Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man,  
 Done you more wrong; we both have undergone  
 That trouble which has left me thrice your own.  
 Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
 And here I lay this penance on myself,  
 Not, tho’ mine own ears heard you yesternorn—  
 You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,  
 I heard you say, that you were no true wife,  
 I swear I will not ask your meaning in it.  
 I do believe yourself against yourself,  
 And will henceforward rather die than doubt.’

740

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
 She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart.  
 She only pray’d him, ‘Fly, they will return  
 And slay you; fly, your charger is without,  
 My palfrey lost.’ ‘Then, Enid, shall you ride  
 Behind me.’ ‘Yea,’ said Enid, ‘let us go.’  
 And moving out they found the stately horse,  
 Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
 But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
 Neigh’d with all gladness as they came, and stoop’d  
 With a low whinny toward the pair; and she  
 Kiss’d the white star upon his noble front,  
 Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse  
 Mounted, and reach’d a hand, and on his foot  
 She set her own and climb’d; he turn’d his face  
 And kiss’d her climbing, and she cast her arms  
 About him, and at once they rode away.

750

760

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
 O’er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
 Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
 Than lived thro’ her who in that perilous hour  
 Put hand to hand beneath her husband’s heart,  
 And felt him hers again. She did not weep,  
 But o’er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
 Like that which kept the heart of Eden green  
 Before the useful trouble of the rain.  
 Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
 As not to see before them on the path,  
 Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
 A knight of Arthur’s court, who laid his lance  
 In rest and made as if to fall upon him.



Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
 She, with her mind all full of what had chanced,  
 Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a dead man!'  
 'The voice of Enid,' said the knight; but she,  
 Beholding it was Eyrn, son of Nudd,  
 Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd again,  
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you life.'  
 And Eyrn moving frankly forward spake:  
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;  
 I took you for a bandit knight of Doorn;  
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
 Who love you, prince, with something of the love  
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.  
 For once, when I was up so high in pride  
 That I was halfway down the slope to hell,  
 By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
 Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
 And since I knew this earl when I myself  
 Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to Doorn—  
 The King is close behind me—bidding him  
 Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the King.'

790

'He hears the judgment of the King of kings,'  
 Cried the wan prince; 'and lo, the powers of Doorn  
 Are scatter'd!' and he pointed to the field,  
 Where, huddled here and there on mound and knoll,  
 Were men and women staring and aghast,  
 While some yet fled; and then he plainlier told  
 How the huge earl lay slain within his hall.  
 But when the knight besought him, 'Follow me,  
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own ear  
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely have endured  
 Strange chances here alone;' that other flush'd,  
 And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,  
 And after madness acted question ask'd;  
 Till Eyrn crying, 'If ye will not go  
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you.'  
 'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they went.  
 But Enid in their going had two fears,  
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
 And one from Eyrn. Every now and then,  
 When Eyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
 She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
 From which old fires have broken, men may fear  
 Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

800

810

'Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause  
 To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.  
 Yourself were first the blameless cause to make  
 My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
 Break into furious flame; being repulsed  
 By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought  
 Until I overturn'd him; then set up—  
 With one main purpose ever at my heart— 830  
 My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;  
 Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,  
 And, toppling over all antagonism,  
 So wax'd in pride that I believed myself  
 Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad;  
 And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,  
 I should have slain your father, seized yourself.  
 I lived in hope that sometime you would come  
 To these my lists with him whom best you loved,  
 And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes, 840  
 The truest eyes that ever answer'd heaven,  
 Behold me overturn and trample on him.  
 Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to me,  
 I should not less have kill'd him. And you came,—  
 But once you came,—and with your own true eyes  
 Beheld the man you loved—I speak as one  
 Speaks of a service done him—overthrow  
 My proud self, and my purpose three years old,  
 And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
 There was I broken down, there was I saved; 850  
 Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the life  
 He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
 And all the penance the Queen laid upon me  
 Was but to rest awhile within her court;  
 Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,  
 And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
 Because I knew my deeds were known, I found,  
 Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
 Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace 860  
 Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
 To glance behind me at my former life,  
 And find that it had been the wolf's indeed.  
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high saint,  
 Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
 Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness  
 Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man.  
 And you were often there about the Queen,  
 But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw;

Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was changed;  
And fear not, cousin, I am changed indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,  
There most in those who most have done them ill.  
And when they reach'd the camp the King himself  
Advanced to greet them, and beholding her  
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,  
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
In converse for a little, and return'd,  
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,  
And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-like,  
And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
Pass into it, turn'd to the prince, and said:

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for my leave  
To move to your own land and there defend  
Your marches, I was prick'd with some reproof,  
As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated hands,  
Not used mine own; but now behold me come  
To cleanse this common sewer of all my realm,  
With Edyrn and with others. Have ye look'd  
At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly changed?  
This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is changed.  
The world will not believe a man repents;  
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.  
Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch  
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.  
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.  
I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,  
Not rashly, but have proved him every way  
One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient; and indeed  
This work of Edyrn, wrought upon himself  
After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,  
My subject with my subjects under him,

Should make an onslaught single on a realm  
Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the death.'

So spake the King; low bow'd the prince, and felt  
His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
And past to Enid's tent; and thither came  
The King's own leech to look into his hurt;  
And Enid tended on him there; and there  
Her constant motion round him, and the breath  
Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
As the Southwest that blowing Bala lake  
Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

920

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
Long since, to guard the justice of the King.  
He look'd and found them wanting; and as now  
Men weed the White Horse on the Berkshire hills,  
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
He rooted out the slothful officer  
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

930

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past  
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
And tho' Geraint could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which he took  
Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,  
He rested well content that all was well.  
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land.  
And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died;  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great prince and man of men.

950

960

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
 Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
 Enid the Good; and in their halls arose  
 The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
 Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,  
 But rested in her fealty till he crown'd  
 A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
 Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
 In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

## BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the king, who held and lost with Lot  
 In that first war, and had his realm restored  
 But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
 To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur call'd  
 His treasurer, one of many years, and spake:  
 'Go thou with him and him and bring it to us,  
 Lest we should set one truer on his throne.  
 Man's word is God in man.'

His baron said:

'We go, but harken: there be two strange knights  
 Who sit near Camelot at a fountain side  
 A mile beneath the forest, challenging  
 And overthrowing every knight who comes.  
 Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,  
 And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him:

'Old friend, too old to be so young, depart,  
 Delay not thou for aught, but let them sit,  
 Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,  
 The light-wing'd spirit of his youth return'd  
 On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and went,  
 So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
 Balin and Balan sitting statue-like,  
 Brethren, to right and left the spring, that down,  
 From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
 Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom of it.  
 And on the right of Balin Balin's horse  
 Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
 Of Balan Balan's near a poplar-tree.  
 'Fair sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit ye here?'  
 Balin and Balan answer'd: 'For the sake

Of glory; we be mightier men than all  
 In Arthur's court: that also have we proved,  
 For whatsoever knight against us came  
 Or I or he have easily overthrown.'  
 'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,  
 But rather proven in his Paynim wars  
 Than famous jousts: but see, or proven or not,  
 Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'  
 And Arthur lightly smote the brethren down,  
 And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside  
 The caroling water set themselves again,  
 And spake no word until the shadow turn'd;  
 When from the fringe of coppice round them burst  
 A spangled pursuivant, and crying, 'Sirs,  
 Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the King,'  
 They follow'd; whom when Arthur seeing ask'd,  
 'Tell me your names; why sat ye by the well?'  
 Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
 Saying, 'An unmelodious name to thee,  
 Balin, "the Savage"—that addition thine—  
 My brother and my better, this man here,  
 Balan. I smote upon the naked skull  
 A thrall of thine in open hall; my hand  
 Was gauntleted, half slew him, for I heard  
 He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath  
 Sent me a three-years' exile from thine eyes.  
 I have not lived my life delightfully;  
 For I that did that violence to thy thrall,  
 Had often wrought some fury on myself,  
 Saving for Balan. Those three kingless years  
 Have past—were wormwood-bitter to me, King,  
 Methought that if we sat beside the well,  
 And hurl'd to ground what knight soever spurr'd  
 Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier back,  
 And make, as ten times worthier to be thine  
 Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I have said.  
 Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day  
 Abash'd us both, and brake my boast. Thy will?'  
 Said Arthur: 'Thou hast ever spoken truth;  
 Thy too fierce manhood would not let thee lie.  
 Rise, my true knight. As children learn, be thou  
 Wiser for falling! walk with me, and move  
 To music with thine Order and the King.  
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren, stands  
 Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,  
 The lost one found was greeted as in heaven  
 With joy that blazed itself in woodland wealth  
 Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers, 80  
 Along the walls and down the board; they sat,  
 And cup clash'd cup; they drank, and some one sang,  
 Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, whereupon  
 Their common shout in chorus, mounting, made  
 Those banners of twelve battles overhead  
 Stir as they stirr'd of old, when Arthur's host  
 Proclaim'd him victor and the day was won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived  
 A wealthier life than heretofore with these  
 And Balin, till their embassy return'd. 90

'Sir King,' they brought report, 'we hardly found,  
 So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall  
 Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once  
 A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd  
 Horse against horse; but seeing that thy realm  
 Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the King  
 Took, as in rival heat, to holy things,  
 And finds himself descended from the Saint  
 Arimathæan Joseph, him who first 100  
 Brought the great faith to Britain over seas.  
 He boasts his life as purer than thine own;  
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse a-beat;  
 Hath push'd aside his faithful wife, nor lets  
 Or dame or damsel enter at his gates  
 Lest he should be polluted. This gray king  
 Show'd us a shrine wherein were wonders—yea,  
 Rich arks with priceless bones of martyrdom,  
 Thorns of the crown and shivers of the cross,  
 And therewithal,—for thus he told us,—brought 110  
 By holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
 Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.  
 He much amazed us; after, when we sought  
 The tribute, answer'd, "I have quite foregone  
 All matters of this world. Garlon, mine heir,  
 Of him demand it," which this Garlon gave  
 With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

'But when we left, in those deep woods we found  
 A knight of thine spear-stricken from behind,  
 Dead, whom we buried; more than one of us  
 Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there 120  
 Reported of some demon in the woods

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Was once a man, who, driven by evil tongues  
From all his fellows, lived alone, and came  
To learn black magic, and to hate his kind  
With such a hate that when he died his soul  
Became a fiend, which, as the man in life  
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw not whence,  
Strikes from behind. This woodman show'd the cave  
From which he sallies and wherein he dwelt.  
We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no more.'

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before me see  
He do not fall behind me. Foully slain  
And villainously! who will hunt for me  
This demon of the woods?' Said Balin, 'I!'  
So claim'd the quest and rode away, but first,  
Embracing Balin: 'Good my brother, hear!  
Let not thy moods prevail when I am gone  
Who used to lay them! hold them outer fiends,  
Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake them aside,  
Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but to dream  
That any of these would wrong thee wrongs thyself.  
Witness their flowery welcome. Bound are they  
To speak no evil. Truly, save for fears,  
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship  
Would make me wholly blest; thou one of them,  
Be one indeed. Consider them, and all  
Their bearing in their common bond of love,  
No more of hatred than in heaven itself,  
No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'

140

So Balin warn'd, and went; Balin remain'd,  
Who—for but three brief moons had glanced away  
From being knighted till he smote the thrall,  
And faded from the presence into years  
Of exile—now would strictlier set himself  
To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,  
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore hover'd round  
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high sweet smile  
In passing, and a transitory word  
Make knight or churl or child or damsel seem  
From being smiled at happier in themselves—  
Sigh'd, as a boy, lame-born beneath a height  
That glooms his valley, sighs to see the peak  
Sun-flushed or touch at night the northern star;  
For one from out his village lately climb'd  
And brought report of azure lands and fair,  
Far seen to left and right; and he himself  
Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred feet

150

168



Up from the base. So Balin, marvelling oft  
 How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to move,  
 Groan'd and at times would mutter: 'These be gifts,  
 Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,  
 Beyond my reach. Well had I foughten—well—  
 In those fierce wars, struck hard—and had I crown'd  
 With my slain self the heaps of whom I slew—  
 So—better!—But this worship of the Queen,  
 That honor too wherein she holds him—this,  
 This was the sunshine that hath given the man  
 A growth, a name that branches o'er the rest,  
 And strength against all odds, and what the King  
 So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.  
 Her likewise would I worship an I might.  
 I never can be close with her, as he  
 That brought her hither. Shall I pray the King  
 To let me bear some token of his Queen  
 Whereon to gaze, remembering her—forget  
 My heats and violences? live afresh?  
 What if the Queen disdain'd to grant it! nay,  
 Being so stately-gentle, would she make  
 My darkness blackness? and with how sweet grace  
 She greeted my return! Bold will I be—  
 Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
 In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,  
 Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning savagery.'

190

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought him, said,  
 'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold, and ask'd  
 To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,  
 Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the King,  
 Who answer'd; 'Thou shalt put the crown to use.  
 The crown is but the shadow of the king,  
 And this a shadow's shadow, let him have it,  
 So this will help him of his violences!'  
 'No shadow,' said Sir Balin, 'O my Queen,  
 But light to me! no shadow, O my King,  
 But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

200

So Balin bare the crown, and all the knights  
 Approved him, and the Queen; and all the world  
 Made music, and he felt his being move  
 In music with his Order and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle May,  
 Hath ever and anon a note so thin  
 It seems another voice in other groves;  
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,

The music in him seem'd to change and grow  
Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall  
His passion half had gauntleted to death,  
That causer of his banishment and shame,  
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously.  
His arm half rose to strike again, but fell;  
The memory of that cognizance on shield  
Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd:

220

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me;  
These high-set courtesies are not for me.  
Shall I not rather prove the worse for these?  
Fierier and stormier from restraining, break  
Into some madness even before the Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,  
And glancing on the window, when the gloom  
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame  
That rages in the woodland far below,  
So when his moods were darken'd, court and king  
And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall  
Shadow'd an angry distance; yet he strove  
To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

230

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat  
Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.  
A walk of roses ran from door to door,  
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower;  
And down that range of roses the great Queen  
Came with slow steps, the morning on her face;  
And all in shadow from the counter door  
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,  
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced  
The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.  
Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard her 'Prince,  
Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen  
As pass without good morrow to thy Queen?'  
To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,  
'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'  
'Yea, so,' she said; 'but so to pass me by—  
So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.  
Let be; ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

240

250

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers:  
'Yea—for a dream. Last night methought I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand  
 In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,  
 And all the light upon her silver face  
 Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.  
 Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes—away;  
 For see, how perfect-pure! As light a flush  
 As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
 Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'

260

'Sweeter to me,' she said, 'this garden rose  
 Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter still  
 The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May!  
 Prince, we have ridden before among the flowers  
 In those fair days—not all as cool as these,  
 Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or sick?  
 Our noble King will send thee his own leech—  
 Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

270

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes; they dwelt  
 Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall. Her hue  
 Changed at his gaze; so turning side by side  
 They past, and Balin started from his bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not what I see.  
 Damsel and lover? hear not what I hear.  
 My father hath begotten me in his wrath.  
 I suffer from the things before me, know,  
 Learn nothing; am not worthy to be knight—  
 A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on gloom  
 Deepen'd; he sharply caught his lance and shield,  
 Nor stay'd to crave permission of the King,  
 But mad for strange adventure, dash'd away.

280

He took the selfsame track as Balan, saw  
 The fountain where they sat together, sigh'd,  
 'Was I not better there with him?' and rode  
 The skyless woods, but under open blue  
 Came on the hoar-head woodman at a bough  
 Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!' he cried,  
 Descended, and disjointed it at a blow;  
 To whom the woodman utter'd wonderingly,  
 'Lord, thou couldst lay the devil of these woods  
 If arm of flesh could lay him!' Balin cried,  
 'Him, or the viler devil who plays his part;  
 To lay that devil would lay the devil in me.'  
 'Nay,' said the churl, 'our devil is a truth,  
 I saw the flash of him but yester-even.  
 And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too

290

Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride unseen.  
 Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd him,  
 'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl;  
 Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving him,  
 Now with slack rein and careless of himself,  
 Now with dug spur and raving at himself,  
 Now with droopt brow down the long glades he rode;  
 So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm  
 Yawn over darkness, where, nor far within,  
 The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd on rocks  
 Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from the floor,  
 Tuskl-like, arising, made that mouth of night  
 Whereout the demon issued up from hell.  
 He mark'd not this, but, blind and deaf to all  
 Save that chain'd rage which ever yelp'd within,  
 Past eastward from the falling sun. At once  
 He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
 And tremble, and then the shadow of a spear,  
 Shot from behind him, ran along the ground.  
 Sideways he started from the path, and saw,  
 With pointed lance as if to pierce, a shape,  
 A light of armor by him flash, and pass  
 And vanish in the woods; and follow'd this,  
 But ail so blind in rage that unawares  
 He burst his lance against a forest bough,  
 Dishors'd himself, and rose again, and fled  
 Far, till the castle of a king, the hall  
 Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped  
 With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built but strong;  
 The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
 The battlement overtop'd with ivy-tods,  
 A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam crying, 'Lord,  
 Why wear ye this crown-royal upon shield?'  
 Said Balin, 'For the fairest and the best  
 Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'  
 So stall'd his horse, and strode across the court,  
 But found the greetings both of knight and king  
 Faint in the low dark hall of banquet. Leaves  
 Laid their green faces flat against the panes,  
 Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs without  
 Whined in the wood; for all was hush'd within,  
 Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise ask'd,  
 'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin said,  
 'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I, and all,  
 As fairest, best, and purest, granted me  
 To bear it!' Such a sound—for Arthur's knights

# BALIN AND BALAN

Were hated strangers in the hall—as makes  
 The white swan-mother, sitting, when she hears  
 A strange knee rustle thro' her secret reeds,  
 Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly smiled:  
 'Fairest I grant her—I have seen; but best,  
 Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall, and yet  
 So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are these  
 So far besotted that they fail to see  
 This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret shame?  
 Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

350

A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd  
 With holy Joseph's legend, on his right  
 Stood, all of massiest bronze. One side had sea  
 And ship and sail and angels blowing on it;  
 And one was rough with wattling, and the walls  
 Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.  
 This Balin graspt, but while in act to hurl,  
 Thro' memory of that token on the shield  
 Relax'd his hold. 'I will be gentle,' he thought,  
 'And passing gentle;' caught his hand away,  
 Then fiercely to Sir Garlon: 'Eyes have I  
 That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
 Shot from behind me, run along the ground;  
 Eyes too that long have watch'd how Lancelot draws  
 From homage to the best and purest, might,  
 Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty thine  
 Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst endure  
 To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy guest,  
 Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!  
 Let be! no more!'

360

But not the less by night  
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his rest,  
 Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim thro' leaves  
 Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and old boughs  
 Whined in the wood. He rose, descended, met  
 The scorner in the castle court, and fain,  
 For hate and loathing, would have past him by;  
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-wise,  
 'What, wear ye still that same crown-scandalous?'  
 His countenance blacken'd, and his forehead veins  
 Bloated and branch'd; and tearing out of sheath  
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery, 'Ha!  
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee ghost,'  
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade flew  
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the stones.  
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward, fell,  
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm

380

390

Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the castle a cry  
 Sounded across the court, and—men-at-arms,  
 A score with pointed lances, making at him—  
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost face,  
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet  
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he mark'd  
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide  
 And inward to the wall; he stept behind;  
 Thence in a moment heard them pass like wolves  
 Howling; but while he stared about the shrine,  
 In which he scarce could spy the Christ for Saints,  
 Beheld before a golden altar lie  
 The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,  
 Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon  
 Push'd thro' an open casement down, lean'd on it,  
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;  
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from what side  
 The blindfold rummage buried in the walls  
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and found  
 His charger, mounted on him and away.  
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the left,  
 One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry,  
 'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things  
 With earthly uses!' made him quickly dive  
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many a mile  
 Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,  
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to ground.

400

420

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all glad,  
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet unlamed,  
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,  
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and thought,  
 'I have shamed thee so that now thou shamest me,  
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a branch  
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,  
 And there in gloom cast himself all along,  
 Moaning, 'My violences, my violences!'

But now the wholesome music of the wood  
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of Mark.  
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode  
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her squire.

430

'The fire of heaven has kill'd the barren cold,  
 And kindled all the plain and all the wold.  
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.  
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in your quire—  
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's desire,  
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire!  
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways.  
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
The whole wood-world is one full peal of praise.  
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is lord of all things good,  
And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,  
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!  
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell!'

Then turning to her squire, 'This fire of heaven,  
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,  
And beat the Cross to earth, and break the King  
And all his Table.'

456

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lane of cloudless air  
Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm  
Drew the vague glance of Vivien and her squire.  
Amazed were these; 'Lo there,' she cried—'a crown—  
Borne by some high lord-prince of Arthur's hall,  
And there a horse! the rider? where is he?  
See, yonder lies one dead within the wood.  
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I will speak.  
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet rest,  
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble deeds.  
But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's hall,  
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from shame,  
A lustful king, who sought to win my love  
Thro' evil ways. The knight with whom I rode  
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my squire  
Hath in him small defence; but thou, Sir Prince,  
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,  
Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,  
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.  
I charge thee by that crown upon thy shield,  
And by the great Queen's name, arise and hence.'

460

470

And Balin rose: 'Thither no more! nor prince  
Nor knight am I, but one that hath defamed  
The cognizance she gave me. Here I dwell  
Savage among the savage woods, here die—  
Die—let the wolves' black maws ensepulchre  
Their brother beast, whose anger was his lord!  
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,

480

Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted up,  
And been thereby uplifted, should thro' me,  
My violence, and my villainy, come to shame!'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and shrill, anon  
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her:  
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?  
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again she sigh'd:  
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often laugh 490  
When sick at heart, when rather we should weep.  
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy rest,  
And now full loth am I to break thy dream,  
But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,  
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark me well.  
Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—  
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—  
Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer dawn—  
By the great tower—Caerleon upon Usk—  
Nay, truly we were hidden—this fair lord, 500  
The flower of all their vestal knighthood, knelt  
In amorous homage—knelt—what else?—O, ay,  
Knelt, and drew down from out his night-black hair  
And mumbled that white hand whose ring'd caress  
Had wander'd from her own King's golden head,  
And lost itself in darkness, till she cried—  
I thought the great tower would crash down on both—  
"Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on the lips,  
Thou art my King." This lad, whose lightest word  
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness, 510  
Saw them embrace; he reddens, cannot speak,  
So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
The deathless mother-maidenhood of heaven,  
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me!  
Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an thou wouldst,  
Do these more shame than these have done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken he,  
Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,  
Breathed in a dismal whisper, 'It is truth.'

Sunnily she smiled: 'And even in this lone wood, 520  
Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.  
Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods have tongues,  
As walls have ears; but thou shalt go with me,  
And we will speak at first exceeding low.  
Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,  
From whence to watch the time, and eagle-like  
Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the Queen.'



She ceased; his evil spirit upon him leapt,  
 He ground his teeth together, sprang with a yell,  
 Tore from the branch and cast on earth the shield,  
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal crown,  
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it from him  
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed the tale,  
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,  
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or beast,  
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan lurking there—  
 His quest was unaccomplish'd—heard and thought  
 'The scream of that wood-devil I came to quell!'  
 Then nearing: 'Lo! he hath slain some brother-knight,  
 And tramples on the goodly shield to show  
 His loathing of our Order and the Queen.  
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil or man,  
 Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake not word,  
 But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the squire,  
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they crash'd  
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,  
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the point  
 Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd  
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's horse  
 Was wearied to the death, and, when they crash'd,  
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man  
 Inward, and either fell and swoon'd away.

540

550

Then to her squire mutter'd the damsel: 'Fools!  
 This fellow hath wrought some foulness with his Queen;  
 Else never had he borne her crown, nor raved  
 And thus foam'd over at a rival name.  
 But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast broken shell,  
 Art yet half-yolk, not even come to down—  
 Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk—  
 And yet hast often pleaded for my love—  
 See what I see, be thou where I have been,  
 Or else, Sir Chick—dismount and loose their casques;  
 I fain would know what manner of men they be.'  
 And when the squire had loosed them, 'Goodly!—look!  
 They might have cropt the myriad flower of May,  
 And butt each other here, like brainless bulls,  
 Dead for one heifer!'

560

Then the gentle squire:  
 'I hold them happy, so they died for love;  
 And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your dog,  
 I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

570

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried; 'I better prize  
The living dog than the dead lion. Away!  
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'  
Then leapt her palfirey o'er the fallen oak,  
And bounding forward, 'Leave them to the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cooling air,  
Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,  
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,  
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where he lay,  
And on his dying brother cast himself  
Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he felt  
One near him; all at once they found the world,  
Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike wail,  
And drawing down the dim disastrous brow  
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd, and spake:

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died  
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy death.  
Why had ye not the shield I knew? and why  
Trampled ye thus on that which bare the crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly and in gasps  
All that had chanced, and Balin moan'd again:

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall;  
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.  
And one said, "Eat in peace! a liar is he,  
And hates thee for the tribute!" This good knight  
Told me that twice a wanton damsel came,  
And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,  
Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.  
I well believe this damsel, and the one  
Who stood beside thee even now, the same.  
"She dwells among the woods," he said, "and meets  
And dallies with him in the Mouth of Hell."  
Foul are their lives, foul are their lips; they lied.  
Pure as our own true mother is our Queen.'

600

'O brother,' answer'd Balin, 'woe is me!  
My madness all thy life has been thy doom,  
Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and now  
The night has come. I scarce can see thee now.  
Good night! for we shall never bid again  
Good morrow—Dark my doom was here, and dark  
It will be there. I see thee now no more.  
I would not mine again should darken thine;  
Good night, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low,  
 'Good night, true brother, here! good morrow there!  
 We two were born together, and we die  
 Together by one doom:' and while he spoke  
 Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept the sleep  
 With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

620

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A storm was coming, but the winds were still,  
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge, and old  
 It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,  
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter grudge  
 The slights of Arthur and his Table, Mark  
 The Cornish King, had heard a wandering voice,  
 A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
 Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say  
 That out of naked knight-like purity  
 Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl,  
 But the great Queen herself, fought in her name,  
 Sware by her—vows like theirs that high in heaven  
 Love most, but neither marry nor are given  
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's report.

10

He ceased, and then—for Vivien sweetly said—  
 She sat beside the banquet nearest Mark,—  
 'And is the fair example follow'd, sir,  
 In Arthur's household?'—answer'd innocently:

20

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths that hold  
 It more beseems the perfect virgin knight  
 To worship woman as true wife beyond  
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden girl.  
 They place their pride in Lancelot and the Queen.  
 So passionate for an utter purity  
 Beyond the limit of their bond are these,  
 For Arthur bound them not to singleness.  
 Brave hearts and clean! and yet—God guide them!—young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl his cup  
 Straight at the speaker, but forbore. He rose  
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien following him,  
 Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within the grass;  
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye fear

30

The monkish manhood, and the mask of pure  
Worn by this court, can stir them till they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scornfully:  
'Why fear? because that foster'd at *thy* court  
I savor of thy—virtues? fear them? no,  
As love, if love be perfect, casts out fear,  
So hate, if hate be perfect, casts out fear.  
My father died in battle against the King,  
My mother on his corpse in open field;  
She bore me there, for born from death was I  
Among the dead and sown upon the wind—  
And then on thee! and shown the truth betimes,  
That old true filth, and bottom of the well,  
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious lessons thine,  
And maxims of the mud! "This Arthur pure!  
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself hath made  
Gives him the lie! There is no being pure,  
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the same?"—  
If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.  
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring thee back,  
When I have ferreted out their burrowings,  
The hearts of all this Order in mine hand—  
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly close,  
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden beard.  
To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine  
Is cleaner-fashion'd—Well, I loved thee first;  
That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.  
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged  
Low in the city, and on a festal day  
When Guinevere was crossing the great hall  
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen, and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have ye wrought?  
Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise arose  
And stood with folded hands and downward eyes  
Of glancing corner and all meekly said:  
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an orphan maid!  
My father died in battle for thy King,  
My mother on his corpse—in open field,  
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse—  
Poor wretch—no friend!—and now by Mark the king,  
For that small charm of feature mine, pursued—  
If any such be mine—I fly to thee.  
Save, save me thou! Woman of women—thine  
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of power,

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Be thine the balm of pity, O heaven's own white  
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless King—  
Help, for he follows! take me to thyself!  
O yield me shelter for mine innocency  
Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes

Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose  
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen who stood  
All glittering like May sunshine on May leaves  
In green and gold, and plumed with green replied:  
'Peace, child! of over-praise and over-blame  
We choose the last. Our noble Arthur, him  
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and know.  
Nay—we believe all evil of thy Mark—  
Well, we shall test thee farther; but this hour  
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
He hath given us a fair falcon which he train'd;  
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the while.'

90

She past; and Vivien murmur'd after, 'Go!  
I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-arch  
Peering askance, and muttering broken-wise,  
As one that labors with an evil dream,  
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to horse.

100

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay, but gaunt;  
Courteous—amends for gauntness—takes her hand—  
That glance of theirs, but for the street, had been  
A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in hand!  
Let go at last!—they ride away—to hawk  
For waterfowl. Royaller game is mine.  
For such a supersensual sensual bond  
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our hearth—  
Touch flax with flame—a glance will serve—the liars!  
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
Thy hole by night to let the boundless deep  
Down upon far-off cities while they dance—  
Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—nor of me  
These—ay, but each of either; ride, and dream  
The mortal dream that never yet was mine—  
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—to me!  
Then, narrow court and lubber King, farewell!  
For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,  
And our wise Queen, if knowing that I know,  
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor me the more.'

110

120

Yet while they rode together down the plain,  
Their talk was all of training, terms of art,  
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.  
'She is too noble,' he said, 'to check at pies,  
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness in her.'  
Here when the Queen demanded as by chance,  
'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let her be,'  
Said Lancelot, and unhooded casting off  
The goodly falcon free: she tower'd; her bells,  
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they lifted up  
Their eager faces, wondering at the strength,  
Boldness, and royal knighthood of the bird,  
Who pounced her quarry and slew it. Many a time  
As once—of old—among the flowers—they rode.

130

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen  
Among her damse's broidering sat, heard, watch'd,  
And whisper'd. Thro' the peaceful court she crept  
And whisper'd; then, as Arthur in the highest  
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the lowest,  
Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,  
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's feet,  
And no quest came, but all was joust and play,  
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and let her be.

140

Thereafter, as an enemy that has left  
Death in the living waters and withdrawn,  
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.

She hated all the knights, and heard in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
Vext at a rumor issued from herself  
Of some corruption crept among his knights,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who prized him more  
Than who should prize him most; at which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by.  
But one had watch'd, and had not held his peace;  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blameless King.  
And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,

150

160

Was also bard, and knew the starry heavens;  
The people call'd him wizard; whom at first  
She play'd about with slight and sprightly talk,  
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd points  
Of slander, glancing here and grazing there;  
And yielding to his kindlier moods, the seer  
Would watch her at her petulance and play,  
Even when they seem'd unlovable, and laugh  
As those that watch a kitten. Thus he grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,  
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when they met  
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fixt devotion that the old man,  
Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times  
Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
And half believe her true; for thus at times  
He waver'd, but that other clung to him,  
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy;  
He walk'd with dreams and darkness, and he found  
A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
World-war of dying flesh against the life,  
Death in all life and lying in all love,  
The meanest having power upon the highest,  
And the high purpose broken by the worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the beach,  
There found a little boat and stept into it;  
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her not.  
She took the helm and he the sail; the boat  
Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,  
And, touching Breton sands, they disembark'd.  
And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
Even to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
The which if any wrought on any one  
With woven paces and with waving arms,  
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
From which was no escape for evermore;  
And none could find that man for evermore,  
Nor could he see but him who wrought the charm  
Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

And Vivien ever sought to work the charm  
Upon the great enchanter of the time,  
As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd his feet,  
As if in deepest reverence and in love.

A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe  
Of samite without price, that more exprest  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,  
In color like the satin-shining palm

220

On sallows in the windy gleams of March.  
And while she kiss'd them, crying, 'Trample me,  
Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the world,  
And I will pay you worship; tread me down  
And I will kiss you for it;' he was mute.

So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,  
As on a dull day in an ocean cave

The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall

230

In silence; wherefore, when she lifted up

A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,

'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,

'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once more,

'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was mute.

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,

Writhed toward him, slid up his knee and sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet

Together, curved an arm about his neck,

Clung like a snake; and letting her left hand

Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,

Made with her right a comb of pearl to part

The lists of such a beard as youth gone out

Had left in ashes. Then he spoke and said,

Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in love

Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd quick:

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once

In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot;

But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think

250

Silence is wisdom. I am silent then,

And ask no kiss;' then adding all at once,

'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,' drew

The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard

Across her neck and bosom to her knee,

And call'd herself a gilded summer fly

Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,

Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood

Without one word. So Vivien call'd herself,



But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly smiled:  
'To what request for what strange boon,' he said,  
'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy.'

260

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:  
'What, O my Master, have ye found your voice?  
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last!  
But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink. No cup had we;  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring  
That gather'd trickling dropwise from the cleft,  
And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling. Then you drank  
And knew no more, nor gave me one poor word;  
O, no more thanks than might a goat have given  
With no more sign of reverence than a beard.  
And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those  
Deep meadows we have traversed, did you know  
That Vivien bathed your feet before her own?  
And yet no thanks; and all thro' this wild wood  
And all this morning when I fondled you.  
Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so strange—  
How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are wise,  
But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

270

280

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said:  
'O, did ye never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave  
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?  
Even such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.  
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court  
To break the mood. You follow'd me unask'd;  
And when I look'd, and saw you following still,  
My mind involved yourself the nearest thing  
In that mind-mist—for shall I tell you truth?  
You seem'd that wave about to break upon me  
And sweep me from my hold upon the world,  
My use and name and fame. Your pardon, child.  
Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again.  
And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,  
Once for wrong done you by confusion, next

290

300

For thanks it seems till now neglected, last  
 For these your dainty gambols; wherefore ask,  
 And take this boon so strange and not so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:  
 'O, not so strange as my long asking it,  
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are strange,  
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.  
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did me wrong.  
 The people call you prophet; let it be;  
 But not of those that can expound themselves.  
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will call  
 That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours  
 No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than yourself,  
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
 Now ask'd again; for see you not, dear love,  
 That such a mood as that which lately gloom'd  
 Your fancy when ye saw me following you  
 Must make me fear still more you are not mine,  
 Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,  
 And make me wish still more to learn this charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me!  
 The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.  
 For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,  
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.  
 And therefore be as great as ye are named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
 How hard you look and how denyingly!  
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
 That I should prove it on you unawares,  
 That makes me passing wrathful; then our bond  
 Had best be loosed for ever; but think or not,  
 By Heaven that hears, I tell you the clean truth,  
 As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk!  
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
 Even in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
 Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
 May this hard earth cleave to the nadir hell  
 Down, down, and close again and nip me flat,  
 If I be such a traitress! Yield my boon,  
 Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;  
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,

310

330

The great proof of your love; because I think,  
However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers and said:

'I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a charm.  
Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man  
Thro' woman the first hour; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the world,  
In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the lines,  
I call it,—well, I will not call it vice;  
But since you name yourself the summer fly,  
I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat  
That settles beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness.  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will ye never ask some other boon?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much!'

360

370

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:  
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your maid;  
Caress her, let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

380

' "In love, if love be love, if love be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' "It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

390

' "The little rift within the lover's lute,  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

' "It is not worth the keeping; let it go:  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all."

'O master, do ye love my tender rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,  
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears  
Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower;  
And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once I heard  
By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit;  
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.  
It was the time when first the question rose  
About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the world;  
And each incited each to noble deeds.  
And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,  
We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,  
And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,  
And should have done it, but the beauteous beast  
Scared by the noise upstart at our feet,  
And like a silver shadow slipt away  
Thro' the dim land. And all day long we rode  
Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,  
"Laugh, little well!" but touch it with a sword,  
It buzzes fiercely round the point; and there  
We lost him—such a noble song was that.  
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:  
'O, mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
And all thro' following you to this wild wood,  
Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
Lo now, what hearts have men! they never mount  
As high as woman in her selfless mood.

And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my song,  
Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this:

“My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,  
For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
And shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.  
So trust me not at all or all in all.”

‘Says she not well? and there is more—this rhyme  
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
That burst in dancing and the pearls were spilt;  
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept;  
But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
On her white neck—so is it with this rhyme.  
It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
And every minstrel sings it differently;  
Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls:  
“Man dreams of fame while woman wakes to love.”  
Yea! love, tho’ love were of the grossest, carves  
A portion from the solid present, eats  
And uses, careless of the rest; but fame,  
The fame that follows death is nothing to us;  
And what is fame in life but half-disfame  
And counterchanged with darkness? ye yourself  
Know well that envy calls you devil’s son,  
And since ye seem the master of all art,  
They fain would make you master of all vice.’

460

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said:  
‘I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who sat alone,  
Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
Azure, an eagle rising or, the sun  
In dexter chief; the scroll, “I follow fame.”  
And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a gardener putting in a graff,  
With this for motto, “Rather use than fame.”  
You should have seen him blush; but afterwards  
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me well;  
For me, I love you somewhat. Rest; and Love  
Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,  
Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him ye say ye love. But Fame with men,  
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,

Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,  
 But work as vassal to the larger love  
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
 Use gave me fame at first, and fame again  
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon!  
 What other? for men sought to prove me vile,  
 Because I fain had given them greater wits;  
 And then did envy call me devil's son.  
 The sick weak beast, seeking to help herself  
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought  
 Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.  
 Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,  
 But when my name was lifted up the storm  
 Brake on the mountain and I cared not for it.  
 Right well know I that fame is half-disfame,  
 Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,  
 To one at least who hath not children vague,  
 The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
 I cared not for it. A single misty star,  
 Which is the second in a line of stars  
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,  
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
 Of some vast charm concluded in that star  
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,  
 Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,  
 That you might play me falsely, having power,  
 However well ye think ye love me now—  
 As sons of kings loving in pupilage  
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power—  
 I rather dread the loss of use than fame;  
 If you—and not so much from wickedness,  
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
 To keep me all to your own self,—or else  
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—  
 Should try this charm on whom ye say ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath:  
 'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted. Good!  
 Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out,  
 And being found take heed of Vivien.  
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger born  
 Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet  
 Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
 Without the full heart back may merit well  
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, O, why not?  
 O, to what end, except a jealous one,  
 And one to make me jealous if I love,  
 Was this fair charm invented by yourself?  
 I well believe that all about this world  
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
 From which is no escape for evermore.'

540

Then the great master merrily answer'd her:  
 'Full many a love in loving youth was mine;  
 I needed then no charm to keep them mine  
 But youth and love; and that full heart of yours  
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you mine;  
 So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought it first,  
 The wrist is parted from the hand that waved,  
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-bones  
 Who paced it, ages back—but will ye hear  
 The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

550

'There lived a king in the most eastern East,  
 Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
 Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
 A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
 Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles;  
 And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,  
 He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
 All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
 And pushing his black craft among them all,  
 He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,  
 With loss of half his people arrow-slain;  
 A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,  
 They said a light came from her when she moved.  
 And since the pirate would not yield her up,  
 The king impaled him for his piracy,  
 Then made her queen. But those isle-nurtured eyes  
 Waged such unwilling tho' successful war  
 On all the youth, they sicken'd; councils thinn'd,  
 And armies waned, for magnet-like she drew  
 The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts;  
 And beasts themselves would worship; camels knelt  
 Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back  
 That carry kings in castles bow'd black knees  
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent hands,  
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
 What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
 His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he sway'd

560

570

580

To find a wizard who might teach the king  
 Some charm which, being wrought upon the queen,  
 Might keep her all his own. To such a one  
 He promised more than ever king has given,  
 A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
 A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 A palace and a princess, all for him;  
 But on all those who tried and fail'd the king  
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning by it  
 To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
 Or, like a king, not to be trifled with—  
 Their heads should moulder on the city gates.  
 And many tried and fail'd, because the charm  
 Of nature in her overbore their own;  
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the walls,  
 And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers.'

590

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said:  
 'I sit and gather honey; yet, methinks,  
 Thy tongue has tript a little; ask thyself.  
 The lady never made *unwilling* war  
 With those fine eyes; she had her pleasure in it,  
 And made her good man jealous with good cause.  
 And lived there neither dame nor damsel then  
 Wroth at a lover's loss? were all as tame,  
 I mean, as noble, as their queen was fair?  
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
 Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?  
 Well, those were not our days—but did they find  
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?'

600

610

She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck  
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes  
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's  
 On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing: 'Nay, not like to me.  
 At last they found—his foragers for charms—  
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
 Who lived alone in a great wild on grass,  
 Read but one book, and ever reading grew  
 So grated down and filed away with thought,  
 So lean his eyes were monstrous; while the skin  
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.  
 And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,  
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,

620



Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men  
 Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
 And heard their voices talk behind the wall,  
 And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm;  
 Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
 When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood roar'd,  
 And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd  
 The world to peace again. Here was the man;  
 And so by force they dragg'd him to the king.  
 And then he taught the king to charm the queen  
 In such-wise that no man could see her more,  
 Nor saw she save the king, who wrought the charm,  
 Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
 And lost all use of life. But when the king  
 Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
 The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 The palace and the princess, that old man  
 Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,  
 And vanish'd, and his book came down to me.'

630

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:  
 'Ye have the book; the charm is written in it.  
 Good! take my counsel, let me know it at once;  
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold,  
 And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound  
 As after furious battle turfs the slain  
 On some wild down above the windy deep,  
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm;  
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
 That is not of his school, nor any school  
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
 On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

660

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
 O, ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
 But every page having an ample marge,  
 And every marge enclosing in the midst  
 A square of text that looks a little blot,  
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;

And every square of text an awful charm,  
 Writ in a language that has long gone by,  
 So long that mountains have arisen since  
 With cities on their flanks—thou read the book!  
 And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd  
 With comment, densest condensation, hard  
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights  
 Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
 And none can read the text, not even I;  
 And none can read the comment but myself;  
 And in the comment did I find the charm.  
 O, the results are simple: a mere child  
 Might use it to the harm of any one,  
 And never could undo it. Ask no more;  
 For tho' you should not prove it upon me,  
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,  
 Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
 And all because ye dream they babble of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:  
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of me?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human wrongs!  
 They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn.  
*They* bound to holy vows of chastity!  
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
 But you are man, you well can understand  
 The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.  
 Not one of all the drove should touch me—swine!'

690

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words:  
 'You breathe but accusation vast and vague,  
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye know,  
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!'

700

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully:  
 'O, ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
 Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife  
 And two fair babes, and went to distant lands,  
 Was one year gone, and on returning found  
 Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one  
 But one hour old! What said the happy sire?  
 A seven-months' babe had been a truer gift.  
 Those twelve sweet moons confused his fatherhood.'

710

Then answer'd Merlin: 'Nay, I know the tale.  
 Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame;  
 Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife.  
 One child they had; it lived with her; she died.

His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring home the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore; take the truth.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'over-true a tale!  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagamore,  
That ardent man? "To pluck the flower in season,"  
So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."  
O Master, shall we call him over-quick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour?'

720

And Merlin answer'd: 'Over-quick art thou  
To catch a loathly plume fallen from the wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
Is man's good name. He never wrong'd his bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd  
And many-corridor'd complexities  
Of Arthur's palace. Then he found a door,  
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
That wreathen round it made it seem his own,  
And wearied out made for the couch and slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless maid;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there,  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from her.  
But when the thing was blazed about the court,  
The brute world howling forced them into bonds,  
And as it chanced they are happy, being pure.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely too!  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
Or some black wether of Saint Satan's fold?  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead!'

750

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge:  
'A sober man is Percivale and pure,  
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard,  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark.  
And that he sinn'd is not believable;

For, look upon his face!—but if he sinn'd,  
 The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
 And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be;  
 Or else were he, the holy king whose hymns  
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath:  
 'O, ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend,  
 Traitor or true? that commerce with the Queen,  
 I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,  
 Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know it?'

To which he answer'd sadly: 'Yea, I know it.  
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
 To fetch her, and she watch'd him from her walls.  
 A rumor runs, she took him for the King,  
 So fixt her fancy on him; let them be.  
 But have ye no one word of loyal praise  
 For Arthur, blameless king and stainless man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh:  
 'Man! is he man at all, who knows and winks?  
 Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks?  
 By which the good King means to blind himself,  
 And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
 To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
 Could call him—were it not for womanhood—  
 The pretty, popular name such manhood earns,  
 Could call him the main cause of all their crime,  
 Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward and fool.'

780

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said:  
 'O true and tender! O my liege and King!  
 O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
 Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness fain  
 Have all men true and leal, all women pure!  
 How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
 From over-fineness not intelligible  
 To things with every sense as false and foul  
 As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,  
 Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame!'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne  
 By instance, recommenced, and let her tongue  
 Rage like a fire among the noblest names,

800

Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
 Defaming and defacing, till she left  
 Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.  
 He dragged his eyebrow bushes down, and made  
 A snowy pent-house for his hollow eyes,  
 And mutter'd in himself: 'Tell *her* the charm!  
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
 To snare the next, and if she have it not  
 So will she rail. What did the wanton say?  
 "Not mount as high!" we scarce can sink as low;  
 For men at most differ as heaven and earth,  
 But women, worst and best, as heaven and hell.  
 I know the Table Round, my friends of old;  
 All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.  
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse with lies.  
 I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
 Being so bitter; for fine plots may fail,  
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
 With colors of the heart that are not theirs.  
 I will not let her know; nine tithes of times  
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the same.  
 And they, sweet soul, that most impute a crime  
 Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,  
 Wanting the mental range, or low desire  
 Not to feel lowest makes them level all;  
 Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,  
 To leave an equal baseness; and in this  
 Are harlots like the crowd that if they find  
 Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
 Not grieving that their greatest are so small,  
 Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
 And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,  
 And touching other worlds. I am weary of her.'

810

830

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part,  
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.  
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,  
 And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or thrice,  
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome sight,  
 How from the rosy lips of life and love  
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death!  
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths of anger puff'd

840

Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-clench'd  
 Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,  
 And feeling. Had she found a dagger there—  
 For in a wink the false love turns to hate—  
 She would have stabb'd him; but she found it not.  
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
 Then her false voice made way, broken with sobs:

850

'O crueller than was ever told in tale  
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!  
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
 Or seeming shameful—for what shame in love,  
 So love be true, and not as yours is?—nothing  
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her crime,  
 All—all—the wish to prove him wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt her hands  
 Together with a wailing shriek, and said:  
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affections to the heart!  
 Seethed like the kid in its own mother's milk!  
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows!  
 I thought that he was gentle, being great;  
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!  
 I should have found in him a greater heart.  
 O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
 The knights, the court, the King, dark in your light,  
 Who loved to make men darker than they are,  
 Because of that high pleasure which I had  
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth  
 The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me  
 With you for guide and master, only you,  
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,  
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left  
 But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

870

880

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,  
 The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid  
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
 And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm  
 In silence, while his anger slowly died  
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
 For ease of heart, and half believed her true;

890

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
 'Come from the storm,' and having no reply,  
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder and the face  
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;  
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms,  
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.  
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
 And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
 Came to her old perch back, and settled there.  
 There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,  
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
 The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,  
 About her, more in kindness than in love,  
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
 But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
 Her arms upon her breast across, and stood,  
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
 Upright and flush'd before him; then she said:

910

'There must be now no passages of love  
 Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore;  
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
 What should be granted which your own gross heart  
 Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.  
 In truth, but one thing now—better have died  
 Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make me stay—  
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain!  
 How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
 I find with grief! I might believe you then,  
 Who knows? once more. Lo! what was once to me  
 Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown  
 The vast necessity of heart and life.  
 Farewell; think gently of me, for I fear  
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
 For one so old, must be to love thee still.  
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once more  
 That if I schemed against thy peace in this,  
 May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send  
 One flash that, missing all things else, may make  
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

920

Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven a bolt—  
 For now the storm was close above them—struck,  
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
 With darted spikes and splinters of the wood  
 The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw  
 The tree that shone white-listed thro' the gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her oath,  
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
 And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps  
 That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
 Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd him close;  
 And call'd him dear protector in her fright,  
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
 But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him close.  
 The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
 Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.  
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales;  
 She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept  
 Of petulancy: she call'd him lord and liege,  
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
 Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love  
 Of her whole life; and ever overhead  
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch  
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
 Above them; and in change of glare and gloom  
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and came;  
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,  
 Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more  
 To peace; and what should not have been had been,  
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.

950

Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
 And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying, 'I have made his glory mine,'  
 And shrieking out, 'O fool!' the harlot leapt  
 Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool.'

### LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
 Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it



A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,  
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd  
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,  
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,  
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
Now made a pretty history to herself  
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,  
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh,  
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle,  
That at Caerleon—this at Camelot—  
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there!  
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God  
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield  
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name?  
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,  
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name  
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him king,  
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.  
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain side;  
For here two brothers, one a king, had met  
And fought together, but their names were lost;  
And each had slain his brother at a blow;  
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd.  
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,  
And lichen'd into color with the crags.  
And he that once was king had on a crown  
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.  
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,  
All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull  
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown  
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn.

And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,  
And set it on his head, and in his heart  
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems  
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights  
Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I chanced  
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—  
For public use. Henceforward let there be,  
Once every year, a joust for one of these;  
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn  
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow  
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land  
Hereafter, which God hinder!' Thus he spoke.  
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still  
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,  
With purpose to present them to the Queen  
When all were won; but, meaning all at once  
To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

60

Now for the central diamond and the last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court  
Hard on the river nigh the place which now  
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake—for she had been sick—to Guinevere:  
'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move  
To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she said, 'ye know it.'  
'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds  
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight ye love to look on.' And the Queen  
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.  
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,  
'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more  
Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen—  
However much he yearn'd to make complete  
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon—  
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,  
'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,  
And lets me from the saddle;' and the King  
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.  
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!  
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights  
 Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd  
 Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones, who take  
 Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!"'  
 Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:  
 'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,  
 My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.  
 Then of the crowd ye took no more account  
 Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
 When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,  
 And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
 Them surely can I silence with all ease.  
 But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
 Of all men; many a bard, without offence,  
 Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
 Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
 The pearl of beauty; and our knights at feast  
 Have pledged us in this union, while the King  
 Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?  
 Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,  
 Now weary of my service and devoir,  
 Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh: 120  
 'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,  
 That passionate perfection, my good lord—  
 But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?  
 He never spake word of reproach to me,  
 He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
 He cares not for me. Only here to-day  
 There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes;  
 Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else  
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
 And swearing men to vows impossible, 130  
 To make them like himself; but, friend, to me  
 He is all fault who hath no fault at all.  
 For who loves me must have a touch of earth;  
 The low sun makes the color. I am yours,  
 Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.  
 And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts;  
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream  
 When sweetest; and the vermin voices here  
 May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:  
 'And with what face, after my pretext made,  
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I

Before a king who honors his own word  
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,  
'A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me; but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit. We hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a touch,  
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,  
This conquers. Hide it therefore; go unknown.  
Win! by this kiss you will; and our true King  
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than himself;  
They prove to him his work. Win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house  
There was not. Some light jest among them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great knight  
Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:  
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name  
Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen; the rest, his Table Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

160

170

180

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:  
 'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,  
 What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
 But since I go to joust as one unknown  
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not:  
 Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—  
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat: 'Here is Torre's:  
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,  
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
 His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,  
 'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'  
 Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir Churl,  
 Is that an answer for a noble knight?  
 Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,  
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,  
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
 To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

206

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not  
 Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,  
 'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre,  
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;  
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt  
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
 And that it was too slippery to be held,  
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
 The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
 That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it—  
 But all was jest and joke among ourselves—  
 Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.  
 But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight.  
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win;  
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

220

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,  
 Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship  
 O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,  
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;  
 And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear,  
 It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,  
 And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'  
 'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,  
 'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'

230

Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
 Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
 Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
 Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
 Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
 'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
 And only queens are to be counted so,  
 Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid  
 Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
 Not violating the bond of like to like.'

240

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,  
 Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
 Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.  
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
 Another sinning on such heights with one,  
 The flower of all the west and all the world,  
 Had been the sleeker for it; but in him  
 His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
 And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
 For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
 Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
 That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
 And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
 However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
 Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,  
 And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
 And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

250

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,  
 Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
 Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
 Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
 But kindly man moving among his kind;  
 Whom they with meats and vintage of their best  
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
 And ever well and readily answer'd he;  
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
 Heard from the baron that, ten years before,  
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
 'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;  
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods

260

270

By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.  
O, tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke  
And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;  
And in the four loud battles by the shore  
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts  
Of Celidon the forest; and again  
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald centred in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;  
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,  
Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
"They are broken, they are broken!" for the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—  
For if his own knight casts him down, he laughs,  
Saying his knights are better men than he—  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him. I never saw his like; there lives  
No greater leader.'

280

310

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living smile

Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,  
 There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
 Of manners and of nature; and she thought  
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
 And all night long his face before her lived,  
 As when a painter, poring on a face,  
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
 The shape and color of a mind and life,  
 Lives for his children, ever at its best  
 And fullest: so the face before her lived,  
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,  
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought  
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.  
 First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating. 340  
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,  
 'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and Lavaine  
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower.  
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd  
 The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew  
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more amazed  
 Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
 The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350  
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,  
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
 Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.  
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire  
 That he should wear her favor at the tilt.  
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,  
 I well believe, the noblest—will you wear  
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he, 360  
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
 Favor of any lady in the lists.  
 Such is my wont, as those who know me know.'  
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing mine  
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,  
 That those who know should know you.' And he turn'd  
 Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd: 'True, my child.  
 Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me.



What is it?' and she told him, 'A red sleeve  
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it. Then he bound  
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
 For any maiden living,' and the blood  
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;  
 But left her all the paler when Lavaine  
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,  
 His brother's, which he gave to Lancelot,  
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:  
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield  
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'  
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your squire!'  
 Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily maid,  
 For fear our people call you lily maid  
 In earnest, let me bring your color back;  
 Once, twice, and thrice. Now get you hence to bed;'  
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,  
 And thus they moved away. She staid a minute,  
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—  
 Her bright hair blown about the serious face  
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—  
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield  
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off  
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,  
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

370

380

Meanwhile the new companions past away  
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,  
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,  
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,  
 And cells and chambers. All were fair and dry;  
 The green light from the meadows underneath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;  
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.  
 And thither wending there that night they bode.

400

410

But when the next day broke from underground,  
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,  
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.  
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name  
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake.'

Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,  
 Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,  
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'  
 And after muttering, 'The great Lancelot,'  
 At last he got his breath and answer'd: 'One,  
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,  
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,  
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind  
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

420

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists  
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round  
 Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,  
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,  
 And from the carven-work behind him crept  
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them  
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable  
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found  
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,  
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work,  
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

440

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said:  
 'Me you call great; mine is the firmer seat,  
 The truer lance; but there is many a youth  
 Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
 And overcome it; and in me there dwells  
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
 Of greatness to know well I am not great.  
 There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped upon him  
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
 The trumpets blew; and then did either side,  
 They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,  
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,  
 Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
 Shock that a man far-off might well perceive,  
 If any man that day were left afield,  
 The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.  
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
 Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it

450

460

Against the stronger. Little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,  
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, 'Lo!  
What is he? I do not mean the force alone—  
The grace and versatility of the man! 470  
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot worn  
Favor of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we that know him know.'  
'How then? who then?' a fury seized them all,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,  
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made  
In moving, all together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea, 480  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark  
And him that helms it; so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head  
Pierced thro' his side, and there snap and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully.  
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth, 490  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.  
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet endure,  
And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin,  
And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew  
Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve  
Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the knights,  
His party, cried, 'Advance and take thy prize  
The diamond;' but he answer'd: 'Diamond me  
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field  
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,  
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head.'  
 'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,  
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'  
 But he, 'I die already with it; draw—  
 Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave  
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,  
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank  
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.  
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
 There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt  
 Whether to live or die, for many a week  
 Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove  
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,  
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

518

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,  
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,  
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,  
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,  
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,  
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize  
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'  
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,  
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day—  
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—  
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—  
 He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,  
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.  
 Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.  
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
 And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you  
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given;  
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him  
 No customary honor; since the knight  
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take  
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
 And bring us where he is, and how he fares,  
 And cease not from your quest until ye find.'

530

So saying, from the carven flower above,  
 To which it made a restless heart, he took  
 And gave the diamond. Then from where he sat  
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,  
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal  
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave  
The banquet and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,  
Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who hath come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain  
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,  
And ridden away to die?' So fear'd the King,  
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,  
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,' she said.  
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen amazed,  
'Was he not with you? won he not your prize?'  
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that like was he.'  
And when the King demanded how she knew,  
Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name  
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name  
From all men, even the King, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;  
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory."'

570

Then replied the King:

'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.  
Surely his King and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter; now remains  
But little cause for laughter. His own kin—  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;

590

So that he went sore wounded from the field.  
 Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine  
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,  
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

600

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she choked,  
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
 Past to her chamber, and there flung herself  
 Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,  
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,  
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the unhearing wall,  
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,  
 And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

610

Gawain the while thro' all the region round  
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,  
 Touch'd at all points except the poplar grove,  
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;  
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid  
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from Camelot, lord?  
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?' 'He won.'  
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the jousts  
 Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught her breath.  
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go.  
 Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swoon'd.  
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came  
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince  
 Reported who he was, and on what quest  
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find  
 The victor, but had ridden a random round  
 To seek him, and had wearied of the search.  
 To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide with us,  
 And ride no more at random, noble prince!  
 Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;  
 This will he send or come for. Furthermore  
 Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,  
 Needs must we hear.' To this the courteous prince  
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
 And staid; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine;  
 Where could be found face daintier? then her shape  
 From forehead down to foot, perfect—again  
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:  
 'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!'  
 And oft they met among the garden yews,

620

630

640

And there he set himself to play upon her  
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
 Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence  
 And amorous adulation, till the maid  
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him: 'Prince,  
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
 Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,  
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove  
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went  
 To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,' said he,  
 'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;  
 But an ye will it let me see the shield.'  
 And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw  
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,  
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:  
 'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!'  
 'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,  
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'  
 'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love  
 This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!  
 Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in vain?'  
 Full simple was her answer: 'What know I?  
 My brethren have been all my fellowship;  
 And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,  
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself—  
 I know not if I know what true love is,  
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
 I know there is none other I can love.'  
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,  
 But would not, knew ye what all others know,  
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,  
 And lifted her fair face and moved away;  
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!  
 One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve.  
 Would he break faith with one I may not name?  
 Must our true man change like a leaf at last?  
 Nay—like enow. Why then, far be it from me  
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!  
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
 Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave  
 My quest with you; the diamond also—here!  
 For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have it

660

680

From your own hand; and whether he love or not,  
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
 A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!  
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
 May meet at court hereafter! there, I think,  
 So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,  
 We two shall know each other.'

690

Then he gave,  
 And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,  
 The diamond, and all wearied of the quest  
 Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went  
 A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

700

Thence to the court he past; there told the King  
 What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the knight.'  
 And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I learnt,  
 But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round  
 The region; but I lighted on the maid  
 Whose sleeve he wore. She loves him; and to her,  
 Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
 I gave the diamond. She will render it;  
 For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,  
 'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more  
 On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
 Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

710

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,  
 For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,  
 Linger'd that other, staring after him;  
 Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad  
 About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
 All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:  
 'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,  
 Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'  
 Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all  
 Had marvel what the maid might be, but most  
 Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame  
 Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.  
 She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
 But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,  
 Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.  
 So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
 Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared;  
 Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice  
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,

720

730



# LANCELOT AND ELAINE

And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat  
With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen  
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor  
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became  
As wormwood and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,  
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said:  
'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'  
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'  
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'  
'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine.  
Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon  
Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,  
'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,  
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.  
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's aid.  
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,  
When these have worn their tokens. Let me hence,  
I pray you.' Then her father nodding said:  
'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well, my child,  
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
Being our greatest. Yea, and you must give it—  
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—  
Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you gone,  
Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride  
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
'Being so very wilful you must die.'

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But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us:  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
 'What matter, so I help him back to life?'  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers;  
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine', she cried, 'Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He amazed, 790  
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'  
 But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves. There first she saw the casque 800  
 Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,  
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by the King.'  
 His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it for me?'  
 And when the maid had told him all the tale  
 Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt 820  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you.

Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she said;  
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'  
 What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more,  
 But did not love the color; woman's love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

830

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
 There bode the night, but woke with dawn, and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
 Thence to the cave. So day by day she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
 And likewise many a night; and Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
 Uncourteous, even he. But the meek maid  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
 The simples and the science of that time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,  
 Would listen for her coming and regret  
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
 And loved her with all love except the love  
 Of man and woman when they love their best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
 And peradventure had he seen her first  
 She might have made this and that other world  
 Another world for the sick man; but now  
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,  
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

840

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Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made  
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live;  
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again,  
 Full often the bright image of one face,  
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.  
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace  
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,  
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well  
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant  
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,  
 And drove her ere her time across the fields  
 Far into the rich city, where alone  
 She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.  
 He will not love me. How then? must I die?'  
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
 That has but one plain message of few notes,  
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
 For all an April morning, till the ear  
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
 Went half the night repeating, 'Must I die?'  
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,  
 And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
 And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death or him,'  
 Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

880

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,  
 To Astolat returning rode the three.  
 There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self  
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,  
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,  
 'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
 If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'  
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
 That she should ask some goodly gift of him  
 For her own self or hers: 'and do not shun  
 To speak the wish most near to your true heart;  
 Such service have ye done me that I make  
 My will of yours, and prince and lord am I  
 In mine own land, and what I will I can.'  
 Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
 But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
 And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,  
 And bode among them yet a little space  
 Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced  
 He found her in among the garden yews,

910

And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
 Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake:  
 'Going? and we shall never see you more.  
 And I must die for want of one bold word.'  
 'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said, 'is yours.'  
 Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:  
 'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'  
 'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'  
 And innocently extending her white arms,  
 'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to be your wife.'  
 And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,  
 I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;  
 But now there never will be wife of mine.'  
 'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,  
 But to be with you still, to see your face,  
 To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'  
 And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world, the world,  
 All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
 To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
 To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
 Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,  
 And your good father's kindness.' And she said,  
 'Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
 Alas for me then, my good days are done!'  
 'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!  
 This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,  
 Most common; yea, I know it of mine own self,  
 And you yourself will smile at your own self  
 Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
 To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.  
 And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
 Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
 More specially should your good knight be poor,  
 Endow you with broad land and territory  
 Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
 So that would make you happy; furthermore,  
 Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,  
 In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
 This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
 And more than this I cannot.'

950

While he spoke  
 She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale  
 Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,  
 'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,  
 And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

960

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay, a lash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me: what I can I will;'  
And there that day remain'd, and toward even 970  
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose the maid,  
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
Unclassing flung the casement back, and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away. 980  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat.  
His very shield was gone; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd  
And grew between her and the pictured wall.  
Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying 'Peace to thee,  
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm. 990  
But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field  
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls  
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and Death,'  
And sang it; sweetly could she make and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain.  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I. 1000

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be.  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away;  
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay;  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;  
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

1010

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought  
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,  
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.  
At last she said: "Sweet brothers, yester-night  
I seem'd a curious little maid again,

1020

As happy as when we dwelt among the woods  
And when ye used to take me with the flood  
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it; there ye fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.  
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have my will;"  
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.

1030

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at me;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;  
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one.  
And there the King will know me and my love,

1040

And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest!’

‘Peace,’ said her father, ‘O my child, ye seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go  
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?’

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say:  
‘I never loved him; an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the house.’

1060

To whom the gentle sister made reply:  
‘Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault  
Not to love me than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.’

1070

‘Highest?’ the father answer’d, echoing ‘highest?’—  
He meant to break the passion in her—‘nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?’

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
‘Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger. These are slanders; never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,  
My father, howsoe’er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God’s best  
And greatest, tho’ my love had no return.  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own desire,  
For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,  
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die.’

1080

1090



## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
 She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,  
 Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
 A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,  
 'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
 Then will I bear it gladly;' she replied,  
 'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
 But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote  
 The letter she devised; which being writ  
 And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,  
 Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet  
 Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
 My latest. Lay the letter in my hand  
 A little ere I die, and close the hand  
 Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
 And when the heat has gone from out my heart,  
 Then take the little bed on which I died  
 For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
 For richness, and me also like the Queen  
 In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
 And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
 To take me to the river, and a barge  
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
 I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
 There surely I shall speak for mine own self,  
 And none of you can speak for me so well.  
 And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
 Go with me; he can steer and row, and he  
 Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased. Her father promised; whereupon  
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death  
 Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
 But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh  
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
 And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,  
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows  
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot took

And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,  
'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,  
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,  
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

1140

1150

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved  
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,  
With deaths of others, and almost his own,  
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for he saw  
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed  
With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet  
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

1160

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd: 'Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These are words;  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words  
Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my Queen,  
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust

1170

1180

To make up that defect: let rumors be.  
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust  
That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen  
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;  
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand  
Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake,  
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and wrong  
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?  
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth  
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you; have your joys apart.  
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep  
So much of what is graceful; and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy  
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule,  
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!  
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;  
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:  
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O, as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—  
She shall not have them.'

1220

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.  
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain  
 At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,  
 Close underneath his eyes, and right across  
 Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge  
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

1230

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away  
 To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,  
 On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,  
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd,  
 'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard face,  
 As hard and still as is the face that men  
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks  
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said:  
 'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!  
 Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?  
 Or come to take the King to Fairyland?  
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
 But that he passes into Fairyland.'

1240

While thus they babbled of the King, the King  
 Came girt with knights. Then turn'd the tongueless man  
 From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
 And pointed to the damsel and the doors.  
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;  
 And reverently they bore her into hall.  
 Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
 And Lancelot later came and mused at her,  
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;  
 But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

1260

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
 I, sometimes call'd the maid of Astolat,  
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
 I loved you, and my love had no return,  
 And therefore my true love has been my death.  
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,  
 And to all other ladies, I make moan:  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
 As thou art a knight peerless.'

1270

Thus he read;

And ever in the reading lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips  
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all: 1280  
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,  
But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a love.  
To this I call my friends in testimony, 1290  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature; what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bade her no farewell;  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen—

Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm:  
'Ye might at least have done her so much grace, 1300  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'  
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
He adding: 'Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;  
It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,  
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,  
More specially were he she wedded poor, 1310  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
To keep them in all joyance. More than this  
I could not; this she would not, and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O my knight,  
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.  
And when the knights had laid her comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure!' which was wrought  
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames  
And people, from the high door streaming, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lancelot,  
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven.'  
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
Approach'd him, and with full affection said:

1320

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have  
Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long practised knight  
And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
To win his honor and to make his name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,  
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvelously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

1350

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.

To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said the King.  
'Let love be free; free love is for the best.  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

1370

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,  
And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,  
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart and sweet,  
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—  
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous one  
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn  
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my child,  
As a king's son," and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!  
For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it.  
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me; but what use in it?  
To make men worse by making my sin known?  
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break  
These bonds that so defame me. Not without

1380

1400

1410

She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,  
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
 Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
 And the strange sound of an adulterous race,  
 Across the iron grating of her cell  
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

80

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what  
 Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
 And each of these a hundred winters old,  
 From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made  
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts became  
 Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
 That now the Holy Grail would come again;  
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,  
 And heal the world of all their wickedness!  
 "O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it come  
 To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay," said he,  
 "I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."  
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought  
 She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

100

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.  
 And when she came to speak, behold her eyes  
 Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
 Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
 Beautiful in the light of holiness!  
 And "O my brother Percivale," she said,  
 "Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;  
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound  
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
 Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use  
 To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender sound  
 As from a distance beyond distance grew  
 Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,  
 Was like that music as it came; and then  
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,  
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
 Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed  
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall;  
 And then the music faded, and the Grail  
 Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls

110

120



The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,  
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,  
That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this  
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd 130  
Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever moved  
Among us in white armor, Galahad.  
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful!"  
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight, and none  
In so young youth was ever made a knight  
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard 140  
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd  
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some  
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said  
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,  
Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;  
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away  
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair 150  
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;  
And out of this she plaited broad and long  
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread  
And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
A crimson grail within a silver beam;  
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,  
Saying: "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,  
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,  
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt. 160  
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,  
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king  
Far in the spiritual city;" and as she spake  
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind  
On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O brother,  
 In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
 Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
 And carven with strange figures; and in and out  
 The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
 Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
 And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Perilous,"  
 Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,  
 "No man could sit but he should lose himself."  
 And once by misadventure Merlin sat  
 In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,  
 Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
 Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,  
 While the great banquet lay along the hall,  
 That Galahad would sit in Merlin's chair.

180

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard  
 A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
 And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
 And in the blast there smote along the hall  
 A beam of light seven times more clear than day;  
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail  
 All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
 And none might see who bare it, and it past.  
 But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
 And staring each at other like dumb men  
 Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride  
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,  
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,  
 And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,  
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,  
 'What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the King,  
 Was not in hall; for early that same day,  
 Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit bold,  
 An outraged maiden sprang into the hall

Crying on help; for all her shining hair  
 Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm 210  
 Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore  
 Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
 In tempest. So the King arose and went  
 To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees  
 That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit  
 Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
 Returning o'er the plain that then began  
 To darken under Camelot; whence the King  
 Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo there! the roofs  
 Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke! 220  
 Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt!"  
 For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
 As having there so oft with all his knights  
 Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty hall,  
 Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
 For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
 And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
 Tower after tower, spire beyond spire, 230  
 By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,  
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.  
 And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt  
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall;  
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
 And on the fourth are men with growing wings,  
 And over all one statue in the mould  
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star. 240  
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown  
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame  
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
 Behold it, crying, "We have still a king."

'And, brother, had you known our hall within,  
 Broader and higher than any in all the lands!  
 Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,  
 And all the light that falls upon the board  
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King. 250  
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,  
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,

And blank; and who shall blazon it? when and how?—  
O, there, perchance, when all our wars are done,  
The brand Excalibur will be cast away!

‘So to this hall full quickly rode the King,  
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt  
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
And in he rode, and up I glanced; and saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all;  
And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms  
Hack’d, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and sear’d,  
Follow’d, and in among bright faces, ours,  
Full of the vision, prest; and then the King  
Spake to me, being nearest, “Percivale,”—  
Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
Vowing, and some protesting,—“what is this?”

260

‘O brother, when I told him what had chanced,  
My sister’s vision and the rest, his face  
Darken’d, as I have seen it more than once,  
When some brave deed seem’d to be done in vain,  
Darken; and “Woe is me, my knights,” he cried,  
“Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.”  
Bold was mine answer, “Had thyself been here,  
My King, thou wouldst have sworn.” “Yea, yea,” said he,  
“Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?”

‘“Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,  
But since I did not see the holy thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.”

280

‘Then when he ask’d us, knight by knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:  
“Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.”

‘“Lo, now,” said Arthur, “have ye seen a cloud?  
What go ye into the wilderness to see?”

‘Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call’d,  
“But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
‘O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me!’ ”

‘“Ah, Galahad, Galahad,” said the King, “for such  
As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—

# THE HOLY GRAIL

Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
 A sign to maim this Order which I made.  
 But ye that follow but the leader's bell,"—  
 Brother, the King was hard upon his knights,—  
 "Taliessin is our fullest throat of song, 300  
 And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.  
 Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
 Five knights at once, and every younger knight,  
 Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
 Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
 What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Percivales"—  
 For thus it pleased the King to range me close  
 After Sir Galahad;—"nay," said he, "but men  
 With strength and will to right the wrong'd, of power  
 To lay the sudden heads of violence flat, 310  
 Knights that in twelve great battles splash'd and dyed  
 The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood—  
 But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.  
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.  
 Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm  
 Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my knights,  
 Your places being vacant at my side,  
 This chance of noble deeds will come and go  
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires  
 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most, 320  
 Return no more. Ye think I show myself  
 Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet  
 The morrow morn once more in one full field  
 Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,  
 Before ye leave him for this quest, may count  
 The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,  
 Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

11

'So when the sun broke next from underground,  
 All the great Table of our Arthur closed  
 And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,  
 So many lances broken—never yet  
 Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;  
 And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
 So many knights that all the people cried,  
 And almost burst the barriers in their heat,  
 Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from underground—  
 O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
 Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
 The King himself had fears that it would fall.

So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs  
 Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
 Met foreheads all along the street of those  
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long  
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks  
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
 Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers  
 Fell as we past; and men and boys astride  
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
 At all the corners, named us each by name,  
 Calling "God speed!" but in the ways below  
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor  
 Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak  
 For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,  
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd aloud,  
 "This madness has come on us for our sins."  
 So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,  
 Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically,  
 And thence departed every one his way.

360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought  
 Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
 How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,  
 So many and famous names; and never yet  
 Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so green,  
 For all my blood danced in me, and I knew  
 That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,  
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,  
 Came like a driving gloom across my mind.  
 Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
 And every evil thought I had thought of old,  
 And every evil deed I ever did,  
 Awoke and cried, "This quest is not for thee."  
 And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
 Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
 And I was thirsty even unto death;  
 And I, too, cried, "This quest is not for thee."

370

'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst  
 Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,  
 With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white  
 Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave  
 And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook  
 Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
 Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"  
 I said, "I am not worthy of the quest;"

380

But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

390

‘And then behold a woman at a door  
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,  
And kind the woman’s eyes and innocent,  
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,  
“Rest here;” but when I touch’d her, lo! she, too,  
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house  
Became no better than a broken shed,  
And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

406

‘And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.  
Then flash’d a yellow gleam across the world,  
And where it smote the plowshare in the field  
The plowman left his plowing and fell down  
Before it; where it glitter’d on her pail  
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought  
“The sun is rising,” tho’ the sun had risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
In golden armor with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels, and his horse  
In golden armor jewelled everywhere;  
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,  
And seem’d to me the lord of all the world,  
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant  
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,  
Open’d his arms to embrace me as he came,  
And up I went and touch’d him, and he, too,  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

410

426

‘And I rode on and found a mighty hill,  
And on the top a city wall’d; the spires  
Prick’d with incredible pinnacles into heaven.  
And by the gateway stirr’d a crowd; and these  
Cried to me climbing, “Welcome, Percivale!  
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!”  
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top  
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past  
Far thro’ a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found  
Only one man of an exceeding age.

430

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

"Where is that goodly company," said I,  
 "That so cried out upon me?" and he had  
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,  
 "Whence and what art thou?" and even as he spoke  
 Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I  
 Was left alone once more and cried in grief,  
 "Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
 And touch it, it will crumble into dust!"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,  
 Low as the hill was high, and where the vale  
 Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby  
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
 To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

440

' "O son, thou hast not true humility,  
 The highest virtue, mother of them all;  
 For when the Lord of all things made Himself  
 Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
 'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is thine,'  
 And all her form shone forth with sudden light  
 So that the angels were amazed, and she  
 Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star  
 Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east.  
 But her thou hast not known; for what is this  
 Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?  
 Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
 As Galahad." When the hermit made an end,

450

In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone  
 Before us, and against the chapel door  
 Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in prayer  
 And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,  
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
 The holy elements alone; but he,

460

"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,  
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.  
 I saw the fiery face as of a child  
 That smote itself into the bread and went;  
 And hither am I come; and never yet  
 Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,  
 This holy thing, fail'd from my side, nor come  
 Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,  
 Fainter by day, but always in the night  
 Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh  
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top  
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
 Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,  
 Shattering all evil customs everywhere,

470



And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,  
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,  
 And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this  
 Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,  
 And hence I go, and one will crown me king  
 Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,  
 For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

480

'While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,  
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew  
 One with him, to believe as he believed.  
 Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

'There rose a hill that none but man could climb,  
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-courses—  
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it, storm  
 Round us and death; for every moment glanced  
 His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick and thick  
 The lightnings here and there to left and right  
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,  
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
 Sprang into fire. And at the base we found  
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
 A great black swamp and of an evil smell,  
 Part black, part whiten'd with the bones of men,  
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient king  
 Had built a way, where, link'd with many a bridge,  
 A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.  
 And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,  
 And every bridge as quickly as he crost  
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I yearn'd  
 To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens  
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such as seem'd  
 Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first  
 At once I saw him far on the great Sea,  
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.  
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,  
 If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.  
 And when the heavens open'd and blazed again  
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
 And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
 Become a living creature clad with wings?  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
 For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.  
 Then in a moment when they blazed again

490

501

520

Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
 Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star  
 I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
 And gateways in a glory like one pearl—  
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—  
 Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot  
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there  
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,  
 Which never eyes on earth again shall see.  
 Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,  
 And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge  
 No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd  
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and thence  
 Taking my war-horse from the holy man,  
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more, return'd  
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars.'

530

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for in sooth  
 These ancient books—and they would win thee—teem,  
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
 With miracles and marvels like to these,  
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,  
 Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
 Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass  
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,  
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
 To these old walls—and mingle with our folk;  
 And knowing every honest face of theirs  
 As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,  
 And every homely secret in their hearts,  
 Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
 And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-in,  
 And mirthful sayings, children of the place,  
 That have no meaning half a league away;  
 Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,  
 Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,  
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,  
 Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—  
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
 Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,  
 No man, no woman?'

540

550

560

Then Sir Percivale:  
 'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
 And women were as phantoms. O, my brother,  
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee  
 How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?  
 For after I had lain so many nights,

A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,  
 In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan 570  
 And meagre, and the vision had not come;  
 And then I chanced upon a goodly town  
 With one great dwelling in the middle of it.  
 Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd  
 By maidens each as fair as any flower;  
 But when they led me into hall, behold,  
 The princess of that castle was the one,  
 Brother, and that one only, who had ever  
 Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old  
 A slender page about her father's hall, 580  
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
 Went after her with longing, yet we twain  
 Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.  
 And now I came upon her once again,  
 And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
 And all his land and wealth and state were hers.  
 And while I tarried, every day she set  
 A banquet richer than the day before  
 By me, for all her longing and her will  
 Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn, 590  
 I walking to and fro beside a stream  
 That flash'd across her orchard underneath  
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
 And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first time,  
 And gave herself and all her wealth to me.  
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning word,  
 That most of us would follow wandering fires,  
 And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,  
 The heads of all her people drew to me,  
 With supplication both of knees and tongue:  
 "We have heard of thee; thou art our greatest knight,  
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe.  
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."  
 O me, my brother! but one night my vow  
 Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,  
 And even the holy quest, and all but her;  
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad 610  
 Cared not for her nor anything upon earth.'

Then said the monk: 'Poor men, when yule is cold,  
 Must be content to sit by little fires.  
 And this am I, so that ye care for me  
 Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven

That brought thee here to this poor house of ours  
 Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm  
 My cold heart with a friend; but O the pity  
 To find thine own first love once more—to hold,  
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms, 620  
 Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,  
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed!  
 For we that want the warmth of double life,  
 We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet  
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
 Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,  
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
 But live like an old badger in his earth,  
 With earth about him everywhere, despite  
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside, 630  
 None of your knights?'

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:  
 'One night my pathway swerving east, I saw  
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
 All in the middle of the rising moon,  
 And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,  
 And each made joy of either. Then he ask'd:  
 "Where is he? hast thou seen him—Lancelot?—Once,"  
 Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me—mad,  
 And maddening what he rode; and when I cried,  
 'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest 640  
 So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!  
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
 For now there is a lion in the way!'  
 So vanish'd."

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
 Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
 Because his former madness, once the talk  
 And scandal of our table, had return'd;  
 For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him  
 That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors  
 Beyond the rest. He well had been content 650  
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,  
 The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,  
 Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
 Small heart was his after the holy quest.  
 If God would send the vision, well; if not,  
 The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors  
 Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,

And found a people there among their crags,  
 Our race and blood, a remnant that were left  
 Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
 They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men  
 Were strong in that old magic which can trace  
 The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him  
 And this high quest as at a simple thing,  
 Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's words—  
 A mocking fire: "what other fire than he,  
 Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,  
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"  
 And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,  
 Hearing he had a difference with their priests,  
 Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell  
 Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there  
 In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep  
 Over him till by miracle—what else?—  
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,  
 Such as no wind could move; and thro' the gap  
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud. Then came a night  
 Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap  
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—  
 For, brother, so one night, because they roll  
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,  
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—  
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,  
 In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"  
 Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,  
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—  
 Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me!—  
 In color like the fingers of a hand  
 Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
 A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,  
 Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now  
 That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was  
 Who spake so low and sadly at our board,  
 And mighty reverent at our grace was he;  
 A square-set man and honest, and his eyes,  
 An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,  
 Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,  
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.  
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd

The city, found ye all your knights return'd,  
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I,  
Brother, and truly; since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again,  
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones  
Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

710

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them.  
And those that had not, stood before the King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me hail,  
Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings,  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded for us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now—the quest,  
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup  
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?"

720

730

'So when I told him all thyself hast heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning, ask'd  
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest for thee?"

' "Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for such as I.  
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
Who made me sure the quest was not for me;  
For I was much a-wearied of the quest,  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me."

740

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom at first  
 He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, push'd  
 Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,  
 Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,  
 Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
 "Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true  
 Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;" and Bors,  
 "Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;  
 I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

750

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for the rest  
 Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.  
 Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
 Our Arthur kept his best until the last;  
 "Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King, "my friend,  
 Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd for thee?"

760

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot, with a groan;  
 "O King!"—and when he paused methought I spied  
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes—

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,  
 Happier are those that welter in their sin,  
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,  
 Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin  
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,  
 Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung  
 Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as each,  
 Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy knights  
 Sware, I swear with them only in the hope  
 That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
 They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I spake  
 To one most holy saint, who wept and said  
 That, save they could be pluck'd asunder, all  
 My quest were but in vain; to whom I vow'd  
 That I would work according as he will'd.  
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and strove  
 To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far away.

780

There was I beaten down by little men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been enow  
 To scare them from me once; and then I came  
 All in my folly to the naked shore,  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
 So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,

790

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the sound.  
 And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my sin.'  
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all the stars;  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker! There was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon was full.  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs,  
 There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes  
 Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,  
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between,  
 And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,  
 'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts  
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my hand, and fell.  
 And up into the sounding hall I past;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
 No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
 But always in the quiet house I heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower  
 To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps  
 With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb  
 For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
 'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord  
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!'  
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door;  
 It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
 As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,  
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—

800

810

820

830

840



O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!  
 And but for all my madness and my sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw  
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd  
 And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

"So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—  
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—  
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,  
 "Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?  
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?  
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our leest.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,  
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,  
 For these have seen according to their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the chord;  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot; never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,  
 With such a closeness but apart there grew,  
 Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,  
 Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;  
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?  
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said

To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
 That most of them would follow wandering fires,  
 Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and gone,  
 And left me gazing at a barren board,  
 And a lean Order—scarce return'd a tithe—  
 And out of those to whom the vision came  
 My greatest hardly will believe he saw.  
 Another hath beheld it afar off,  
 And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,  
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
 And one hath had the vision face to face,  
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,  
 However they may crown him elsewhere.

890

“And some among you held that if the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow.  
 Not easily, seeing that the King must guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to plow,  
 Who may not wander from the allotted field  
 Before his work be done, but, being done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the day  
 Come as they will; and many a time they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,  
 This air that smites his forehead is not air  
 But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—  
 In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
 And knows himself no vision to himself,  
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
 Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye have seen.”

900

910

‘So spake the King; I knew not all he meant.’

### PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the gap  
 Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat  
 In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a youth,  
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
 Past, and the sunshine came along with him.

‘Make me thy knight, because I know, Sir King,  
 All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.’  
 Such was his cry; for having heard the King

Had let proclaim a tournament—the prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won  
The golden circlet, for himself the sword.  
And there were those who knew him near the King,  
And promised for him; and Arthur made him knight.

10

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the Isles—  
But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was he—  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm and reel'd  
Almost to falling from his horse, but saw  
Near him a mound of even-sloping side  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
And here and there great hollies under them;  
But for a mile all round was open space  
And fern and heath. And slowly Pelleas drew  
To that dim day, then, binding his good horse  
To a tree, cast himself down; and as he lay  
At random looking over the brown earth  
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the grove,  
It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.  
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes closed.  
And since he loved all maidens, but no maid  
In special, half-awake he whisper'd: 'Where?  
O, where? I love thee, tho' I know thee not.  
For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
And I will make thee with my spear and sword  
As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
For I will be thine Arthur when we meet.'

20

40

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might have seem'd  
A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken stood;

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way and one that,  
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the light.  
There she that seem'd the chief among them said:  
'In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way.  
To right? to left? straight forward? back again?  
Which? tell us quickly.'

60

Pelleas gazing thought,  
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'  
For large her violet eyes look'd, and her bloom  
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in womanhood;  
And slender was her hand and small her shape;  
And but for those large eyes, the haunts of scorn,  
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,  
And pass and care no more. But while he gazed  
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul;  
For as the base man, judging of the good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul to hers,  
Believing her, and when she spake to him  
Stammer'd, and could not make her a reply.  
For out of the waste islands had he come,  
Where saving his own sisters he had known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd against the gulls,  
Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

70

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady round  
And look'd upon her people; and, as when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn  
The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her company.  
Three knights were thereamong, and they too smiled,  
Scorning him; for the lady was Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

80

Again she said: 'O wild and of the woods,  
Knowest thou not the fashion of our speech?

Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair face,  
Lacking a tongue?’

‘O damsel,’ answer’d he,  
‘I woke from dreams, and coming out of gloom  
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and crave  
Pardon; but will ye to Caerleon? I  
Go likewise; shall I lead you to the King?’

100

‘Lead then,’ she said; and thro’ the woods they went.  
And while they rode, the meaning in his eyes,  
His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,  
His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart  
She mutter’d, ‘I have lighted on a fool,  
Raw, yet so stale!’ But since her mind was bent  
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name  
And title, ‘Queen of Beauty,’ in the lists  
Cried—and beholding him so strong she thought  
That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet—therefore flatter’d him,  
Being so gracious that he wellnigh deem’d  
His wish by hers was echo’d; and her knights  
And all her damsels too were gracious to him,  
For she was a great lady.

110

And when they reach’d  
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
Taking his hand, ‘O the strong hand,’ she said,  
‘See! look at mine! but wilt thou fight for me,  
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
That I may love thee?’

120

Then his helpless heart  
Leapt, and he cried, ‘Ay! wilt thou if I win?’  
‘Ay, that will I,’ she answer’d, and she laugh’d,  
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it from her;  
Then glanced askew at those three knights of hers,  
Till all her ladies laugh’d along with her.

‘O happy world,’ thought Pelleas, ‘all, meseems,  
Are happy; I the happiest of them all!’  
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his blood,  
And green wood-ways, and eyes among the leaves;  
Then being on the morrow knighted, sware  
To love one only. And as he came away,  
The men who met him rounded on their heels  
And wonder’d after him, because his face

130

Shone like the countenance of a priest of old  
 Against the flame about a sacrifice  
 Kindled by fire from heaven; so glad was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and strange knights 140  
 From the four winds came in; and each one sat,  
 Tho' served with choice from air, land, stream, and sea,  
 Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his eyes  
 His neighbor's make and might; and Pelleas look'd  
 Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
 His lady loved him, and he knew himself  
 Loved of the King; and him his new-made knight  
 Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved him more  
 Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning of the jousts, 150  
 And this was call'd 'The Tournament of Youth;'  
 For Arthur, loving his young knight, withheld  
 His older and his mightier from the lists,  
 That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,  
 According to her promise, and remain  
 Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the jousts  
 Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk  
 Holden; the gilded parapets were crown'd  
 With faces, and the great tower fill'd with eyes  
 Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew. 160  
 There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the field  
 With honor; so by that strong hand of his  
 The sword and golden circlet were achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved; the heat  
 Of pride and glory fired her face, her eye  
 Sparkled; she caught the circlet from his lance,  
 And there before the people crown'd herself.  
 So for the last time she was gracious to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her look 170  
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her knight—  
 Linger'd Ettarre; and, seeing Pelleas droop,  
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee much,  
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
 To him who won thee glory!' And she said,  
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your bower,  
 My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat the Queen,  
 As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and herself,  
And those three knights all set their faces home,  
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him cried:  
'Damsels—and yet I should be shamed to say it—  
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
Among yourselves. Would rather that we had  
Some rough old knight who knew the worldly way,  
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
And jest with! Take him to you, keep him off,  
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,  
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell their boys.  
Nay, should ye try him with a merry one  
To find his mettle, good; and if he fly us,  
Small matter! let him.' This her damsels heard,  
And, mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
They, closing round him thro' the journey home,  
Acted her best, and always from her side  
Restrain'd him with all manner of device,  
So that he could not come to speech with her.  
And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang the bridge,  
Down rang the grate of iron thro' the groove,  
And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas thought,  
'To those who love them, trials of our faith.  
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I.'  
So made his moan, and, darkness falling, sought  
A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose  
With morning every day, and, moist or dry,  
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn to wrath.  
Then, calling her three knights, she charged them, 'Out!  
And drive him from the walls.' And out they came,  
But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd  
Against him one by one; and these return'd,  
But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate; and once,  
A week beyond, while walking on the walls  
With her three knights, she pointed downward, 'Look,  
He haunts me—I cannot breathe—besieges me!  
Down! strike him! put my hate into your strokes,  
And drive him from my walls.' And down they went,  
And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;

And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,  
 'Bind him, and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;  
 Then let the strong hand, which had overthrown  
 Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew.  
 Be bounden straight, and so they brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the sight  
 Of her rich beauty made him at one glance  
 More bondsman in his heart than in his bonds.  
 Yet with good cheer he spake: 'Behold me, lady,  
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;  
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
 Content am I so that I see thy face  
 But once a day; for I have sworn my vows,  
 And thou hast given thy promise, and I know  
 That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen me strain'd  
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
 Yield me thy love and know me for thy knight.'

230

240

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
 With all her damsels, he was stricken mute,  
 But, when she mock'd his vows and the great King,  
 Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine own self,  
 Peace, lady, peace; is he not thine and mine?'  
 'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his voice  
 But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,  
 And thrust him out of doors; for save he be  
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
 He will return no more.' And those, her three,  
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
 She call'd them, saying: 'There he watches yet,  
 There like a dog before his master's door!  
 Kick'd, he returns; do ye not hate him, ye?  
 Ye know yourselves; how can ye bide at peace,  
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
 Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at once,  
 And if ye slay him I reckon not; if ye fail,  
 Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in.  
 It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

260

She spake, and at her will they couch'd their spears,  
 Three against one; and Gawain passing by,



Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
 Low down beneath the shadow of those towers  
 A villainy, three to one; and thro' his heart  
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds  
 Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy side—  
 The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but forbear;  
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's will.'

270

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,  
 Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
 Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, withheld  
 A moment from the vermin that he sees  
 Before him, shivers ere he springs and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to three;  
 And they rose up, and bound, and brought him in.  
 Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas, burn'd  
 Full on her knights in many an evil name  
 Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten hound:  
 'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,  
 Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust him out,  
 And let who will release him from his bonds.  
 And if he comes again'—there she brake short;  
 And Pelleas answer'd: 'Lady, for indeed  
 I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,  
 I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd  
 Thro' evil spite; and if ye love me not,  
 I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn.  
 I had liefer ye were worthy of my love  
 Than to be loved again of you—farewell.  
 And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love,  
 Vex not yourself; ye will not see me more.'

280

290

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the man  
 Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and thought:  
 'Why have I push'd him from me? this man loves,  
 If love there be; yet him I love not. Why?  
 I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in him  
 A something—was it nobler than myself?—  
 Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my kind.  
 He could not love me, did he know me well.  
 Nay, let him go—and quickly.' And her knights  
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out of door.

300

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from his bounds,  
 And flung them o'er the walls; and afterward,  
 Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
 'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou not—'

310

Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made  
Knight of his table; yea, and he that won  
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their will?’

And Pelleas answer’d: ‘O, their wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr’d tho’ it be with spite and mockery now,  
Other than when I found her in the woods;  
And tho’ she hath me bounden but in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face;  
Else must I die thro’ mine unhappiness.’

320

And Gawain answer’d kindly tho’ in scorn:  
‘Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will;  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine—Christ kill me then  
But I will slice him handless by the wrist,  
And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
Howl as he may! But hold me for your friend.  
Come, ye know nothing; here I pledge my troth,  
Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say  
That I have slain thee. She will let me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall;  
Then, when I come within her counsels, then  
From prime to vespers will I chant thy praise  
As prowtest knight and truest lover, more  
Than any have sung thee living, till she long  
To have thee back in lusty life again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds and warm,  
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now thy horse  
And armor; let me go; be comforted.  
Give me three days to melt her fancy, and hope  
The third night hence will bring thee news of gold.’

330

340

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his arms,  
Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and took  
Gawain’s, and said, ‘Betray me not, but help—  
Art thou not he whom men call light-of-love?’

350

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so light;'  
Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-tide

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;  
360 'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee not!'  
But Gawain lifting up his vizor said:  
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate.  
Behold his horse and armor. Open gates,  
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo!  
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that hath  
His horse and armor; will ye let him in?  
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the court,  
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the wall,  
Blowing his bugle as who should say him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro' open door  
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courteously.  
'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,' said he,  
'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'  
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good knight,  
But never let me bide one hour at peace.'  
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair enow;  
But I to your dead man have given my troth,  
That whom ye loathe, him will I make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the land,  
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought a moon  
With promise of large light on woods and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a sound  
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—  
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the Queen,  
And seen her sadden listening—vext his heart,  
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within the rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous fair,  
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and sky,  
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine air—  
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
 One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,  
 No rose but one—what other rose had I?  
 One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die,—  
 He dies who loves it,—if the worm be there.'

400

This tender rhyme, and evermore the doubt,  
 'Why lingers Gawain with his golden news?'  
 So shook him that he could not rest, but rode  
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse  
 Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,  
 And no watch kept; and in thro' these he past,  
 And heard but his own steps, and his own heart  
 Beating, for nothing moved but his own self  
 And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,  
 And spied not any light in hall or bower,  
 But saw the postern portal also wide  
 Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all  
 Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt  
 And overgrowing them, went on, and found,  
 Here too, all hush'd below the mellow moon,  
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
 Came lightening downward, and so spilt itself  
 Among the roses and was lost again.

410

Then was he ware of three pavilions rear'd  
 Above the bushes, gilden-peakt. In one,  
 Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights  
 Slumbering, and their three squires across their feet;  
 In one, their malice on the placid lip  
 Frozen by sweet sleep, four of her damsels lay;  
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and Ettarre.

420

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf  
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew;  
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears  
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound  
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court again,  
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he stood  
 There on the castle-bridge once more, and thought,  
 'I will go back, and slay them where they lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet in sleep  
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,  
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword, and thought,  
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood;' again,

440

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

'Alas that ever a knight should be so false!'  
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning laid  
The naked sword athwart their naked throats,  
There left it, and them sleeping; and she lay,  
The circlet of the tourney round her brows,  
And the sword of the tourney across her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on his horse  
Stared at her towers that, larger than themselves  
In their own darkness, throng'd into the moon;  
Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs, and clench'd  
His hands, and madden'd with himself and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in their blood  
At the last day? I might have answer'd them  
Even before high God. O towers so strong,  
Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to your base  
Split you, and hell burst up your harlot roofs  
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and thro' within,  
Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a skull!  
Let the fierce east scream thro' your eyelet-holes,  
And whirl the dust of harlots round and round  
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I saw him there—  
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell! Who yells  
Here in the still sweet summer night but I—  
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her fool?  
Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself most fool;  
Beast too, as lacking human wit—disgraced,  
Dishonor'd all for trial of true love—  
Love?—we be all alike; only the King  
Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows!  
O great and sane and simple race of brutes  
That own no lust because they have no law!  
For why should I have loved her to my shame?  
I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.  
I never loved her, I but lusted for her—  
Away!'

460

476

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her throat,  
Awakening knew the sword, and turn'd herself  
To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not slain  
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might have slain  
Me and thyself.' And he that tells the tale  
Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd

To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth  
And only lover; and thro' her love her life  
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the night,  
And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
From out the soft, the spark from off the hard,  
Rode till the star above the wakening sun, 490  
Beside that tower where Percivale was cowl'd,  
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the dawn.  
For so the words were flash'd into his heart  
He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O sweet star,  
Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!'  
And there he would have wept, but felt his eyes  
Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
In summer. Thither came the village girls  
And linger'd talking, and they come no more  
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from the heights 500  
Again with living waters in the change  
Of seasons. Hard his eyes, harder his heart  
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs that he,  
Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,  
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself down,  
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so lay,  
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one nigh, 510  
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him, crying,  
'False! and I held thee pure as Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard  
That Lancelot'—there he check'd himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound again, 520  
And pricks it deeper; and he shrank and wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held their vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said Percivale.  
'Why, then let men couple at once with wolves.  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
 Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse  
 And fled. Small pity upon his horse had he,  
 Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
 A cripple, one that held a hand for alms—  
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-elm  
 That turns its back on the salt blast, the boy  
 Paused not, but overrode him, shouting, 'False,  
 And false with Gawain!' and so left him bruised  
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and wood  
 Went ever streaming by him till the gloom  
 That follows on the turning of the world  
 Darken'd the common path. He twitch'd the reins,  
 And made his beast, that better knew it, swerve  
 Now off it and now on; but when he saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes of even,  
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build too high.'

530

540

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from the Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
 And marvelling what it was; on whom the boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
 Borne, clash'd; and Lancelot, saying, 'What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so hard?'  
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a scourge am I  
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'  
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many names,' he cried:  
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,  
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen.'  
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt thou pass.'  
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and either knight  
 Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once  
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung  
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark field,  
 'Thou art false as hell; slay me, I have no sword.'  
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—and sharp;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be slain,'  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the fallen,  
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then spake:  
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy say.'

560

570

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-horse back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while

Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
 There with her knights and dames was Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have ye fought?'  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,' he said.  
 'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay, my Queen.'  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee fail'd  
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he answer'd not,  
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,  
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let me know.'  
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
 She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I have no sword,'  
 Sprang from the door into the dark. The Queen  
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her,  
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be;  
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song  
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey.  
 Then a long silence came upon the hall,  
 And Modred thought, 'The time is hard at hand.'

586

### THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood  
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
 At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.  
 And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,  
 And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
 Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
 Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-dead,  
 From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,  
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air  
 Bearing an eagle's nest; and thro' the tree  
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the wind  
 Pierced ever a child's cry; and crag and tree  
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,



This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,  
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon, brought  
A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying took,  
Then gave it to his Queen to rear. The Queen,  
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
And named it Nestling; so forgot herself  
A moment, and her cares; till that young life  
Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold  
Past from her, and in time the carcanet  
Vext her with plaintive memories of the child.  
So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,  
'Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,  
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize.'

30

To whom the King: 'Peace to thine eagle-borne  
Dead nestling, and this honor after death,  
Following thy will! but, O my Queen, I muse  
Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone  
Those diamonds that I rescued from the tarn,  
And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them fall,' she cried,  
'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they were,  
A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,  
Not knowing they were lost as soon as given—  
Slid from my hands when I was leaning out  
Above the river—that unhappy child  
Past in her barge; but rosier luck will go  
With these rich jewels, seeing that they came  
Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
Perchance—who knows?—the purest of thy knights  
May win them for the purest of my maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts  
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways  
From Camelot in among the faded fields  
To furthest towers; and everywhere the knights  
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the King:

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or fiend?  
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splinter'd teeth,  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt stump  
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the maim'd churl:

'He took them and he drave them to his tower—  
Some hold he was a table-knight of thine—  
A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight, he—  
Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red Knight  
Brake in upon me and drave them to his tower;  
And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would outright have slain,  
Save that he sware me to a message, saying:  
"Tell thou the King and all his liars that I  
Have founded my Round Table in the North,  
And whatsoever his own knights have sworn  
My knights have sworn the counter to it—and say  
My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves—and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other; and say his hour is come,  
The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

70

80

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the seneschal:  
'Take thou my churl, and tend him curiously  
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.  
The heathen—but that ever-climbing wave,  
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest—and renegades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion, whom  
The wholesome realm is purged of elsewhere,  
Friends, thro' your manhood and your fealty,—now  
Make their last head like Satan in the North.  
My younger knights, new-made, in whom your flower  
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling, which achieved,  
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to shore.  
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle with it,  
Only to yield my Queen her own again?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent; is it well?'

100

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd: 'It is well;  
Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me. 110  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd him,  
And while they stood without the doors, the King  
Turn'd to him saying: 'Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his ears"?  
The foot that loiters, bidden go,—the glance  
That only seems half-loyal to command,—  
A manner somewhat fallen from reverence—  
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our knights  
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm, uprear'd,  
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd  
North by the gate. In her high bower the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that she sigh'd. 130  
Then ran across her memory the strange rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

But when the morning of a tournament,  
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds of pure 140  
White samite, and by fountains running wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen  
White-robed in honor of the stainless child,  
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.  
He looked but once, and vail'd his eyes again. 150

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream  
 To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll  
 Of autumn thunder, and the jousts began;  
 And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf,  
 And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume  
 Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one  
 Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
 When all the goodlier guests are past away,  
 Sat their great umpire looking o'er the lists.  
 He saw the laws that ruled the tournament  
 Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast down  
 Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
 The dead babe and follies of the King;  
 And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
 And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,  
 Modred, a narrow face. Anon he heard  
 The voice that billow'd round the barriers roar  
 An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,  
 But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
 And armor'd all in forest green, whereon  
 There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
 And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,  
 With ever-scattering berries, and on shield  
 A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late  
 From over-seas in Brittany return'd,  
 And marriage with a princess of that realm,  
 Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the Woods—  
 Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain  
 His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake  
 The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
 With Tristram even to death. His strong hands gript  
 And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
 Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of those  
 That ware their ladies' colors on the casque  
 Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,  
 And there with gibes and flickering mockeries  
 Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests! O shame!  
 What faith have these in whom they swear to love?  
 The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

160

180

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems,  
 Not speaking other word than, 'Hast thou won?  
 Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand  
 Wherewith thou takest this is red!' to whom  
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous mood,  
 Made answer: 'Ay, but wherefore toss me this  
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound?  
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength of heart

And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,  
Are winners in this pastime of our King.  
My hand—belike the lance hath dript upon it—  
No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief knight,  
Right arm of Arthur in the battle-field,  
Great brother, thou nor I have made the world;  
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made his horse  
Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying,  
'Fair damsels, each to him who worships each  
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'  
And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one  
Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and one,  
'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung,  
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day  
Went glooming down in wet and weariness;  
But under her black brows a swarthy one  
Laugh'd shrilly, crying: 'Praise the patient saints,  
Our one white day of Innocence hath past,  
Tho' somewhat dragged at the skirt. So be it.  
The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the year,  
Would make the world as blank as winter-tide.  
Come—let us gladden their sad eyes, our Queen's  
And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
With all the kindlier colors of the field.'

220

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast  
Variously gay; for he that tells the tale  
Likened them, saying, as when an hour of cold  
Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,  
And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers  
Pass under white, till the warm hour returns  
With veer of wind and all are flowers again,  
So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
And glowing in all colors, the live grass,  
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced  
About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,  
And wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts,  
Brake up their sports, then slowly to her bower  
Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

230

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn  
High over all the yellowing autumn-tide

240

Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.  
 Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so, Sir Fool?'  
 Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet replied,  
 'Belike for lack of wiser company;  
 Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
 Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip  
 To know myself the wisest knight of all.'  
 'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eating dry  
 To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
 To dance to.' Then he twangled on his harp,  
 And while he twangled little Dagonet stood  
 Quiet as any water-sodden log  
 Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook,  
 But when the twangling ended, skipt again;  
 And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not, Sir Fool?'  
 Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty years  
 Skip to the broken music of my brains  
 Than any broken music thou canst make.'  
 Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come, 280  
 'Good now, what music have I broken, fool?'  
 And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur, the King's;  
 For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,  
 Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
 Her daintier namesake down in Brittany—  
 And so thou breakest Arthur's music too.'  
 'Save for that broken music in thy brains,  
 Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break thy head.  
 Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o'er,  
 The life had flown, we sware but by the shell— 270  
 I am but a fool to reason with a fool—  
 Come, thou art crabb'd and sour; but lean me down,  
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,  
 And harken if my music be not true.

' "Free love—free field—we love but while we may.  
 The woods are hush'd, their music is no more;  
 The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.  
 New leaf, new life—the days of frost are o'er;  
 New life, new love, to suit the newer day;  
 New loves are sweet as those that went before. 280  
 Free love—free field—we love but while we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,  
 Not stood stock-still. I made it in the woods,  
 And heard it ring as true as tested gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his hand:  
 'Friend, did ye mark that fountain yesterday,  
 Made to run wine?—but this had run itself  
 All out like a long life to a sour end—

And them that round it sat with golden cups  
 To hand the wine to whosoever came—  
 The twelve small damosels white as Innocence,  
 In honor of poor Innocence the babe,  
 Who left the gems which Innocence the Queen  
 Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
 Gave for a prize—and one of those white slips  
 Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
 “Drink, drink, Sir Fool,” and thereupon I drank,  
 Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the draught was mud.’

290

And Tristram: ‘Was it muddier than thy gibes?  
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—  
 Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool—  
 “Fear God: honor the King—his one true knight—  
 Sole follower of the vows”—for here be they  
 Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
 Smuttier than blasted grain. But when the King  
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
 It frighted all free fool from out thy heart;  
 Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,  
 A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,  
 For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine.’

300

310

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet:  
 ‘Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my neck  
 In lieu of hers, I’ll hold thou hast some touch  
 Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
 Swine? I have wallow’d, I have wash’d—the world  
 Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.  
 The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
 Hath foul’d me—an I wallow’d, then I wash’d—  
 I have had my day and my philosophies—  
 And thank the Lord I am King Arthur’s fool.  
 Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams, and geese  
 Troop’d round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm’d  
 On such a wire as musically as thou  
 Some such fine song—but never a king’s fool.’

320

And Tristram, ‘Then were swine, goats, asses, geese  
 The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
 Had such a mastery of his mystery  
 That he could harp his wife up out of hell.’

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,  
 ‘And whither harp’st thou thine? down! and thyself  
 Down! and two more; a helpful harper thou,  
 That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star  
 We call the Harp of Arthur up in heaven?’

330

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King  
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,  
Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on all hills and in the signs of heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd: 'Ay, and when the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your wit—  
And whether he were king by courtesy,  
Or king by right—and so went harping down  
The black king's highway, got so far and grew  
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes  
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.  
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?'

340

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in open day.'  
And Dagonet: 'Nay, nor will; I see it and hear.  
It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I and Arthur and the angels hear,  
And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he said, 'ye talk  
Fool's treason; is the King thy brother fool?'  
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd:  
'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!  
Conceits himself as God that he can make  
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,  
And men from beasts—Long live the king of fools!'

350

And down the city Dagonet danced away;  
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.  
Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore  
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.  
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,  
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or even a fallen feather, vanish'd again.

360

370

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At length  
A lodge of intertwined beechen-boughs.  
Furze-cramm'd and bracken-rooft, the which himself  
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt



Against a shower, dark in the golden grove  
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with him; 380  
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,  
With six or seven, when Tristram was away,  
And snatch'd her thence, yet, dreading worse than shame  
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,  
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt  
So sweet that, halting, in he past and sank  
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;  
But could not rest for musing how to smooth  
And sleek his marriage over to the queen. 390  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all  
The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.  
But then what folly had sent him over-seas  
After she left him lonely here? a name?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany  
Isolt, the daughter of the king? 'Isolt  
Of the White Hands,' they call'd her: the sweet name  
Allured him first, and then the maid herself,  
Who served him well with those white hands of hers,  
And loved him well, until himself had thought 400  
He loved her also, wedded easily,  
But left her all as easily, and return'd.  
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes  
Had drawn him home—what marvel? then he laid  
His brows upon the drifted leaf and dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany  
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and both  
Began to struggle for it, till his queen  
Graspt it so hard that all her hand was red. 410  
Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand is red!  
These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,  
And melts within her hand—her hand is hot  
With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,  
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'  
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then  
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hundred spears  
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed, 420  
And many a glancing plash and sallowy isle,  
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh

Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
 That stood with open doors, whereout was roll'd  
 A roar of riot, as from men secure  
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.  
 'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth, for there,  
 High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
 A goodly brother of the Table Round  
 Swung by the neck; and on the boughs a shield  
 Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,  
 And there beside a horn, inflamed the knights  
 At that dishonor done the gilded spur,  
 Till each would clash the shield and blow the horn.  
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.  
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,  
 That sent the face of all the marsh aloft  
 An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud  
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard, and all,  
 Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
 In blood-red armor sallying, howl'd to the King:

430

440

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat!—  
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted king  
 Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world—  
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's curse, and I!  
 Slain was the brother of my paramour  
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine  
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell  
 And stings itself to everlasting death,  
 To hang whatever knight of thine I fought  
 And tumbled. Art thou king?—Look to thy life!'

He ended. Arthur knew the voice; the face  
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name  
 Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.  
 And Arthur deign'd not use of word or sword,  
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from horse  
 To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
 Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp  
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,  
 Heard in dead night along that table-shore,  
 Drops flat, and after the great waters break  
 Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,  
 Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing; thus he fell  
 Head-heavy. Then the knights, who watch'd him, roar'd  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the fallen,

460

There trampled out his face from being known,  
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves; 470  
 Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and slew  
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with massacre.  
 Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,  
 Which half that autumn night, like the live North,  
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres 480  
 About it, as the water Moab saw  
 Come round by the east, and out beyond them flush'd  
 The long low dune and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,  
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.  
 He whistled his good war-horse left to graze  
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him, 490  
 And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,  
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,  
 Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,' she said, 'my man  
 Hath left me or is dead;' whereon he thought—  
 'What, if she hate me now? I would not this.  
 What, if she love me still? I would not that.  
 I know not what I would'—but said to her,  
 'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,  
 He find thy favor changed and love thee not'—  
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonesse 500  
 Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past and gain'd  
 Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,  
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the queen.  
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind  
 The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,  
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and there 510  
 Belted his body with her white embrace,  
 Crying aloud: 'Not Mark—not Mark, my soul!

The footstep flutter'd me at first—not he!  
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,  
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his halls  
 Who hates thee, as I him—even to the death.  
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark  
 Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh,  
 To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am here;  
 Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

529

And drawing somewhat backward she replied:  
 'Can he be wrong'd who is not even his own,  
 But save for dread of thee had beaten me,  
 Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow—Mark?  
 What rights are his that dare not strike for them?  
 Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me thus!  
 But harken! have ye met him? hence he went  
 To-day for three days' hunting—as he said—  
 And so returns belike within an hour.  
 Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not thou with Mark,  
 Because he hates thee even more than fears,  
 Nor drink; and when thou passest any wood  
 Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush  
 Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.  
 My God, the measure of my hate for Mark  
 Is as the measure of my love for thee!'

539

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,  
 Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake  
 To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying:  
 'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
 Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,  
 For, ere I mated with my shambling king,  
 Ye twain had fallen out about the bride  
 Of one—his name is out of me—the prize,  
 If prize she were—what marvel?—she could see—  
 Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks  
 To wreck thee villainously—but, O Sir Knight,  
 What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?'

549

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Paramount,  
 Here now to my queen paramount of love  
 And loveliness—ay, lovelier than when first  
 Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,  
 Sailing from Ireland.'

559

Softly laugh'd Isolde:  
 'Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen  
 My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said:

'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,  
And thine is more to me—soft, gracious, kind—  
Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips  
Most gracious; but she, haughty, even to him,  
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow  
To make one doubt if ever the great Queen  
Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt:

'Ah, then, false hunter and false harper, thou  
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,  
Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me  
That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,  
And I—misyoked with such a want of man—  
That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd: 'O my soul, be comforted!  
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,  
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin  
That made us happy; but how ye greet me—fear  
And fault and doubt—no word of that fond tale—  
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories  
Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

570

And, saddening on the sudden, spake Isolt:  
'I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for, hour by hour,  
Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
O, sweeter than all memories of thee,  
Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas,  
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain dash'd  
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss? Wedded her?  
Fought in her father's battles? wounded there?  
The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,  
And she, my namesake of the hands, that heal'd  
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and caress—  
Well—can I wish her any huger wrong  
Than having known thee? her too hast thou left  
To pine and waste in those sweet memories.  
O, were I not my Mark's, by whom all men  
Are noble, I should hate thee more than love.'

580

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied:  
'Grace, queen, for being loved; she loved me well.  
Did I love her? the name at least I loved.

Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!  
 The night was dark; the true star set. Isolt!  
 The name was ruler of the dark—Isolt?  
 Care not for her! patient, and prayerful, meek,  
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

600

And Isolt answer'd: 'Yea, and why not I?  
 Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.  
 Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat,  
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,  
 Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,  
 And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.  
 Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me stood,  
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend—  
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark—  
 For there was Mark: "He has wedded her," he said,  
 Not said, but hiss'd it; then this crown of towers  
 So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,  
 And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
 "I will flee hence and give myself to God"—  
 And thou wert lying in thy new leman's arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her hand,  
 'May God be with thee, sweet, when old and gray,  
 And past desire!' a saying that anger'd her.  
 '“May God be with thee, sweet, when thou art old,  
 And sweet no more to me!” I need Him now.  
 For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so gross  
 Even to the swineherd's malkin in the mast?  
 The greater man the greater courtesy.  
 Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's knight!  
 But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild beasts—  
 Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance  
 Becomes thee well—art grown wild beast thyself.  
 How dardest thou, if lover, push me even  
 In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
 In the gray distance, half a life away,  
 Her to be loved no more? Unsay it, unswear!  
 Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
 Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,  
 Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck  
 Lies like sweet wines. Lie to me; I believe.  
 Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye kneel,  
 And solemnly as when ye sware to him,  
 The man of men, our King—My God, the power  
 Was once in vows when men believed the King!

630

640

They lied not then who sware, and thro' their vows  
 The King prevailing made his realm—I say,  
 Swear to me thou wilt love me even when old,  
 Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in despair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down:  
 'Vows! did you keep the vow you made to Mark  
 More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay, but learnt,  
 The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself—  
 My knighthood taught me this—ay, being snapt—  
 We run more counter to the soul thereof  
 Than had we never sworn. I swear no more.  
 I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.  
 For once—even to the height—I honor'd him.  
 "Man, is he man at all?" methought, when first  
 I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld  
 That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—  
 His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
 Like hill-snow high in heaven, the steel-blue eyes,  
 The golden beard that clothed his lips with light—  
 Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
 With Merlin's mystic babble about his end  
 Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool  
 Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no man,  
 But Michael trampling Satan; so I sware,  
 Being amazed. But this went by—The vows!  
 O, ay—the wholesome madness of an hour—  
 They served their use, their time; for every knight  
 Believed himself a greater than himself,  
 And every follower eyed him as a God;  
 Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
 Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had done,  
 And so the realm was made. But then their vows—  
 First mainly thro' that sullyng of our Queen—  
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking whence  
 Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?  
 Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up from out the deep?  
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and blood  
 Of our old kings. Whence then? a doubtful lord  
 To bind them by inviolable vows,  
 Which flesh and blood perforce would violate;  
 For feel this arm of mine—the tide within  
 Red with free chase and heather-scented air,  
 Pulsing full man. Can Arthur make me pure  
 As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
 From uttering freely what I freely hear?  
 Bind me to one? The wide world laughs at it.  
 And worldling of the world am I, and know

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The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour  
 Woos his own end; we are not angels here  
 Nor shall be. Vows—I am woodman of the woods,  
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale  
 Mock them—my soul, we love but while we may;  
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her, and she said:  
 'Good; an I turn'd away my love for thee  
 To some one thrice as courteous as thyself—  
 For courtesy wins woman all as well  
 As valor may, but he that closes both  
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller indeed,  
 Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I loved  
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast thee back  
 Thine own small saw, "We love but while we may,"  
 Well then, what answer?'

700

He that while she spake,  
 Mindful of what he brought to adorn her with,  
 The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch  
 The warm white apple of her throat, replied,  
 'Press this a little closer, sweet, until—  
 Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd—meat,  
 Wine, wine—and I will love thee to the death,  
 And out beyond into the dream to come.'

710

So then, when both were brought to full accord,  
 She rose, and set before him all he will'd;  
 And after these had comforted the blood  
 With meats and wines, and satiated their hearts—  
 Now talking of their woodland paradise,  
 The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts, the lawns;  
 Now mocking at the much ungainliness,  
 And craven shifts, and long crane legs of Mark—  
 Then Tristram laughing caught the harp and sang:

'Ay, ay, O, ay—the winds that bend the brier!  
 A star in heaven, a star within the mere!  
 Ay, ay, O, ay—a star was my desire,  
 And one was far apart and one was near.  
 Ay, ay, O, ay—the winds that bow the grass!  
 And one was water and one star was fire,  
 And one will ever shine and one will pass.  
 Ay, ay, O, ay—the winds that move the mere!'

730

Then in the light's last glimmer Tristram show'd  
 And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,  
 'The collar of some Order, which our King



Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,  
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy peers.'

'Not so, my queen,' he said, 'but the red fruit  
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,  
And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for his last  
Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging round her neck,  
Claspt it, and cried, 'Thine Order, O my queen!'  
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd throat,  
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,  
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—  
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while he climb'd,  
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,  
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw  
The great Queen's bower was dark,—about his feet  
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,  
'What art thou?' and the voice about his feet  
Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,  
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

## GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
A novice. One low light betwixt them burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight  
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance. For this  
He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,  
 Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,  
 Had been—their wont—a-maying and return'd,  
 That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,  
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
 The wildest and the worst; and more than this  
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
 Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
 So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
 And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
 But when he knew the prince tho' marr'd with dust,  
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
 Made such excuses as he might, and these  
 Full knightly without scorn. For in those days  
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;  
 But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, in him  
 By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
 And he was answer'd softly by the King  
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
 To raise the prince, who rising twice or thrice  
 Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went;  
 But, ever after, the small violence done  
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
 A little bitter pool about a stone  
 On the bare coast.

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But when Sir Lancelot told  
 This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd  
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries,  
 'I shudder, some one steps across my grave;  
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
 Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
 Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began

60

To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear— 70  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—  
 Held her awake; or if she slept she dream'd  
 An awful dream, for then she seem'd to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
 Before it till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—  
 When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet, 80  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew,  
 Till even the clear face of the guileless King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household life,  
 Became her bane; and at the last she said:  
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again some evil chance  
 Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze  
 Before the people and our lord the King.'  
 And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
 And still they met and met. Again she said,  
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.'  
 And then they were agreed upon a night—  
 When the good King should not be there—to meet  
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.  
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met  
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye, 100  
 Low on the border of her couch they sat  
 Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the tower  
 For testimony; and crying with full voice,  
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,  
 And all was still. Then she, 'The end is come,  
 And I am ashamed for ever;' and he said:  
 'Mine be the shame, mine was the sin; but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas.  
 There will I hide thee till my life shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against the world.'

She answer'd: 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?  
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
 Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
 Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary, 120  
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,  
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
 And then they rode to the divided way,  
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping; for he past,  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
 Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
 Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,  
 And heard the spirits of the waste and weald  
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan.  
 And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late, too late!' 130  
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
 A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,  
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field of death;  
 For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,  
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
 Begin to slay the folk and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she spake  
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine enemies  
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
 Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor ask 140  
 Her name to whom ye yield it till her time  
 To tell you;' and her beauty, grace, and power  
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared  
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
 For many a week, unknown, among the nuns,  
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,  
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
 But communed only with the little maid,  
 Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness  
 Which often lured her from herself; but now, 150  
 This night, a rumor wildly blown about  
 Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm  
 And leagued him with the heathen, while the King  
 Was waging war on Lancelot. Then she thought,  
 'With what a hate the people and the King  
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her hands  
 Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
 No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so late!  
 What hour, I wonder now?' and when she drew

No answer, by and by began to hum  
 An air the nuns had taught her: 'Late, so late!'  
 Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,  
 'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep.'  
 Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

180

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!  
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,  
 And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!  
 O, let us in, that we may find the light!  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?  
 O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passionately,  
 Her head upon her hands, remembering  
 Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.  
 Then said the little novice prattling to her:

180

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;  
 But let my words—the words of one so small,  
 Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
 And if I do not there is penance given—  
 Comfort your sorrows, for they do not flow  
 From evil done; right sure am I of that,  
 Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's  
 And weighing find them less; for gone is he  
 To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,  
 Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;  
 And Modred whom he left in charge of all,  
 The traitor—Ah, sweet lady, the King's grief  
 For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,  
 Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours!  
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not great;  
 For if there ever come a grief to me  
 I cry my cry in silence, and have done;  
 None knows it, and my tears have brought me good.  
 But even were the griefs of little ones  
 As great as those of great ones, yet this grief  
 Is added to the griefs the great must bear,  
 That, howsoever much they may desire

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# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud;  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked Queen,  
And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
But were I such a King it could not be.'

210

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,  
'Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?'  
But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders, there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

220

Then thought the Queen within herself again,  
'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?'  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously:  
'Yea, but I know; the land was full of signs  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table—at the founding of it,  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he said  
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turning—there,  
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them—headland after headland flame  
Far on into the rich heart of the west.  
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,  
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,

230

240

Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods  
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed.  
And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;  
And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd; for every knight  
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
By hands unseen; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
While the wine ran; so glad were spirits and men  
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

260

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,  
'Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,  
Spirits and men. Could none of them foresee,  
Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm?'

270

To whom the novice garrulously again:  
'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father said,  
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;  
And many a mystic lay of life and death  
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,  
When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.  
So said my father—and that night the bard  
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King  
As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those  
Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois.  
For there was no man knew from whence he came;  
But after tempest, when the long wave broke  
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,  
There came a day as still as heaven, and then  
They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea,  
And that was Arthur, and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approved King;

280

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And that his grave should be a mystery  
 From all men, like his birth; and could he find  
 A woman in her womanhood as great  
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
 The twain together well might change the world.  
 But even in the middle of his song  
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fallen,  
 But that they stay'd him up; nor would he tell  
 His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw  
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?'

306

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they have set her on,  
 Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,  
 To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.  
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,  
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
 Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue  
 Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem  
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
 Which my good father told me, check me too  
 Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,  
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,  
 And left me; but of others who remain,  
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
 But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved  
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?'

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Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her:  
 'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;  
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
 Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

330

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such fair fruit?  
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold  
 Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
 The most disloyal friend in all the world.'



To which a mournful answer made the Queen:  
 'O, closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,  
 What knowest thou of the world and all its lights  
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?  
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,  
 And weep for her who drew him to his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for both;  
 But I should all as soon believe that his,  
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be  
 Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen.'

350

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;  
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried:  
 'Such as thou art be never maiden more  
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague  
 And play upon and harry me, petty spy  
 And traitress!' When that storm of anger brake  
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
 White as her veil, and stood before the Queen  
 As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
 And when the Queen had added, 'Get thee hence!'  
 Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
 Saying in herself: 'The simple, fearful child  
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,  
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
 But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent!  
 For what is true repentance but in thought—  
 Not even in inmost thought to think again  
 The sins that made the past so pleasant to us?  
 And I have sworn never to see him more,  
 To see him more.'

360

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And even in saying this,  
 Her memory from old habit of the mind  
 Went slipping back upon the golden days  
 In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,  
 Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,  
 Ambassador, to yield her to his lord  
 Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
 Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
 Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love

380

And sport and tilts and pleasure,—for the time  
 Was may-time, and as yet no sin was dream'd,—  
 Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
 That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,  
 And on from hill to hill, and every day  
 Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
 For brief repast or afternoon repose  
 By couriers gone before; and on again,  
 Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw  
 The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
 That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,  
 Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

399

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,  
 And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
 Came to that point where first she saw the King  
 Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find  
 Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,  
 High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,  
 'Not like my Lancelot'—while she brooded thus  
 And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,  
 There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
 A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,  
 Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King!' She sat  
 Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet  
 Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
 Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,  
 And grovell'd with her face against the floor.  
 There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair  
 She made her face a darkness from the King,  
 And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
 Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,  
 Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's  
 Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the King's:

409

410

'Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
 I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?  
 Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
 The children born of thee are sword and fire,  
 Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
 The craft of kindred and the godless hosts  
 Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;  
 Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,  
 The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,  
 Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
 In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.

420

And knowest thou now from whence I come—from him,  
 From waging bitter war with him; and he,  
 That did not shun to smite me in worse way,  
 Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
 He spared to lift his hand against the King  
 Who made him knight. But many a knight was slain;  
 And many more and all his kith and kin  
 Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
 And many more when Modred raised revolt,  
 Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
 To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
 And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
 True men who love me still, for whom I live,  
 To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
 Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
 Fear not; thou shalt be guarded till my death.  
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.  
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,  
 That I the King should greatly care to live;  
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
 Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
 Even for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.  
 For when the Roman left us, and their law  
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed  
 Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.  
 But I was first of all the kings who drew  
 The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
 The realms together under me, their Head,  
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
 A glorious company, the flower of men,  
 To serve as model for the mighty world,  
 And be the fair beginning of a time.  
 I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
 To reverence the King, as if he were  
 Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
 To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
 To honor his own word as if his God's,  
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
 Of no more subtle master under heaven  
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
 Not only to keep down the base in man,

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# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

But teach high thought, and amiable words  
 And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
 And love of truth, and all that makes a man. 480  
 And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
 Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one to feel  
 My purpose and rejoicing in my joy!"  
 Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;  
 Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;  
 Then others, following these my mightiest knights,  
 And drawing foul ensample from fair names,  
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
 Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine 490  
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,  
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather think  
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
 To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,  
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
 As in the golden days before thy sin.  
 For which of us who might be left could speak  
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?  
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk 500  
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
 And I should evermore be vexed with thee  
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,  
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
 I am not made of so slight elements.  
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
 I hold that man the worst of public foes  
 Who either for his own or children's sake, 510  
 To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
 Whom he knows false abide and rule the house:  
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,  
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps  
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns! 520  
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
 The mockery of my people and their bane!'

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch  
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd  
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;  
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,  
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,—  
 When first I learnt thee hidden here,—is past.  
 The pang—which, while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
 Made my tears burn—is also past—in part.  
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I, 540  
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
 Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play  
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,  
 And beauty such as never woman wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—  
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
 But Lancelot's; nay, they never were the King's.  
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh, 550  
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,  
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,  
 "I loathe thee;" yet not less, O Guinevere,  
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
 So far that my doom is, I love thee still.  
 Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure 560  
 We two may meet before high God, and thou  
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
 I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow.  
 They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
 Far down to that great battle in the west,  
 Where I must strike against the man they call  
 My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues 570

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,  
Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more—  
Farewell!’

And while she grovell’d at his feet,  
She felt the King’s breath wander o’er her neck,  
And in the darkness o’er her fallen head  
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found  
The casement: ‘peradventure,’ so she thought,  
‘If I might see his face, and not be seen.’  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was lower’d,  
To which for crest the golden dragon clung  
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel’s, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.  
And even then he turn’d; and more and more  
The moony vapor rolling round the King,  
Who seem’d the phantom of a giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray  
And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

600

Then she stretch’d out her arms and cried aloud,  
‘O Arthur!’ there her voice brake suddenly,  
Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff  
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—  
Went on in passionate utterance:

‘Gone—my lord!  
Gone thro’ my sin to slay and to be slain!  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell? I should have answer’d his farewell.  
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,  
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?’

610

The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
 And makes me one pollution. He, the King,  
 Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill myself?  
 What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,  
 If soul be soul, nor can I kill my shame;  
 No, nor by living can I live it down.  
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
 The months will add themselves and make the years, 620  
 The years will roll into the centuries,  
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
 I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
 Let the world be; that is but of the world—  
 What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,  
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;  
 His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope 630  
 That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
 Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,  
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights—  
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
 Full easily all impressions from below,  
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
 To which I would not or I could not climb—  
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air, 640  
 That pure severity of perfect light—  
 I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found  
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
 Now—ere he goes to the great battle? none!  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair world, 650  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest;  
 It surely was my profit had I known;  
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand  
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes. She look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,  
 'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'

Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed  
 Within her, and she wept with these and said:

660

‘Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the King.  
 O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying, “Shame!”  
 I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,  
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
 Pray and be pray’d for; lie before your shrines;  
 Do each low office of your holy house;  
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
 Who ransom’d us, and haler too than I;  
 And treat their loathsome hurt and heal mine own;  
 And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer  
 The sombre close of that voluptuous day  
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.’

670

She said. They took her to themselves; and she  
 Still hoping, fearing ‘Is it yet too late?’  
 Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died.  
 Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,  
 And for the power of ministration in her,  
 And likewise for the high rank she had borne,  
 Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess, lived  
 For three brief years, and there, an abbess, past  
 To where beyond these voices there is peace.

680

### THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
 First made and latest left of all the knights,  
 Told, when the man was no more than a voice  
 In the white winter of his age, to those  
 With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,  
 Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,  
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:



'I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,  
 But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.  
 O me! for why is all around us here  
 As if some lesser god had made the world,  
 But had not force to shape it as he would,  
 Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
 And enter it, and make it beautiful?  
 Or else as if the world were wholly fair,  
 But that these eyes of men are dense and dim.  
 And have not power to see it as it is—  
 Perchance, because we see not to the close;—  
 For I, being simple, thought to work His will,  
 And have but stricken with the sword in vain,  
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend  
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
 Reels back into the beast, and is no more.  
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death!  
 Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die.'

20

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,  
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd  
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown  
 Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
 Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all delight!  
 Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.  
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.  
 And I am blown along a wandering wind,  
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!'  
 And fainter onward, like wild birds that change  
 Their season in the night and wail their way  
 From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream  
 Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries  
 Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
 As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
 When all is lost, and wife and child with wail  
 Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd:  
 'Who spake? A dream. O, light upon the wind,  
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries  
 Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild  
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:  
 'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;  
 But in their stead thy name and glory cling  
 To all high places like a golden cloud  
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not pass.

Light was Gawain in life, and light in death  
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
 And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—  
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,  
 And with him many of thy people, and knights  
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown  
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.  
 Right well in heart they know thee for the King.  
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 'Far other is this battle in the west  
 Whereto we move than when we strove in youth,  
 And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,  
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,  
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine  
 To war against my people and my knights.  
 The king who fights his people fights himself.  
 And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke  
 That strikes them dead is as my death to me.  
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw  
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

70

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,  
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,  
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—  
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;  
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,  
 And the long mountains ended in a coast  
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
 And he that fled no further fly the King;  
 And there, that day when the great light of heaven  
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.  
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.  
 A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,  
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew  
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold  
 With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell  
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.  
 For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,  
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;

80

90

100

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

And some had visions out of golden youth,  
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts  
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,  
And ever and anon with host to host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,  
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash  
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks  
After the Christ, of those who falling down  
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;  
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,  
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,  
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs  
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,  
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed after wail  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death  
Or death-like swoon, thus over all that shore,  
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,  
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day  
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came  
A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew  
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide  
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field  
Of battle. But no man was moving there;  
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave  
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro  
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down  
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,  
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,  
And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be.

130

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,  
And whiter than the mist that all day long  
Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,  
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,  
And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—  
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen  
Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;  
Behold, I seem but king among the dead.'

140

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: 'My King!  
 King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,  
 There also will I worship thee as king.  
 Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
 Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought  
 The heathen back among us, yonder stands,  
 Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath been my doom.  
 But call not thou this traitor of my house  
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.  
 My house are rather they who swear my vows,  
 Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me king.  
 And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,  
 When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd, 160  
 That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.  
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;  
 And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see  
 Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the King  
 Made at the man. Then Modred smote his liege  
 Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword  
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,  
 Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
 Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd 170  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,  
 King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full. 180

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
 Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made,—  
 Tho' Merlin swore that I should come again

To rule once more—but let what will be be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known.  
But now delay not; take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere;  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'

200

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—  
A little thing may harm a wounded man;  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

210

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw; but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

220

230

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:  
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;  
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

240

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;  
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:

250

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
 What good should follow this, if this were done?  
 What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,  
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
 An act unprofitable, against himself?  
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
 What record or what relic of my lord  
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
 And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,  
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
 Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
 Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake.  
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
 To all the people, winning reverence.  
 But now much honor and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
 And hid Excalibur the second time,  
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

280

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:  
'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye 290  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.' 300

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur; 310  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems 320  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
 'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
 And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

330

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
 Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found not words;  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

340

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
 And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon!

350

360

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately forms,  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
 Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,



And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

370

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge.'  
So to the barge they came. There those three queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against a brow  
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white  
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust,  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

380

390

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

400

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:  
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done

410

May He within himself make pure! but thou,  
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
 For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer 420  
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
 For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—  
 To the island-valley of Avilion;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns 430  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,  
 And on the mere the wailing died away. 440

But when that moan had past for evermore,  
 The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn  
 Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King is gone.'  
 And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,  
 'From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb  
 The last hard footstep of that iron crag,  
 Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried:  
 'He passes to be king among the dead,  
 And after healing of his grievous wound 450  
 He comes again; but—if he come no more—  
 O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,  
 Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed  
 On that high day, when, clothed with living light,  
 They stood before his throne in silence, friends  
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint  
 As from beyond the limit of the world,  
 Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
 Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice  
 Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb  
 Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,  
 Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,  
 Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,  
 Down that long water opening on the deep  
 Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
 From less to less and vanish into light.  
 And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
 And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—  
 Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
 When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the Prince  
 Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life again  
 From halfway down the shadow of the grave  
 Past with thee thro' thy people and their love,  
 And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all  
 Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man  
 And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,  
 The prayer of many a race and creed, and clime—  
 Thunderless lightnings striking under sea  
 From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,  
 And that true North, whereof we lately heard  
 A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to yourselves;  
 So loyal is too costly! friends—your love  
 Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go.'  
 Is this the tone of empire? here the faith  
 That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice  
 And meaning whom the roar of Hougoumont  
 Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?  
 What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak  
 So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—hour by hour!  
 The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
 Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?  
*There* rang her voice, when the full city peal'd  
 Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their crown  
 Are loyal to their own far sons, who love  
 Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes  
 For ever-broadening England, and her throne

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,  
That knows not her own greatness; if she knows  
And dreads it we are fallen.—But thou, my Queen,  
Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave  
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul,  
Ideal manhood closed in real man,  
Rather than that gray king whose name, a ghost,  
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him  
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one  
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time  
That hover'd between war and wantonness,  
And crownings and dethronements. Take withal  
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that Heaven  
Will blow the tempest in the distance back  
From thine and ours; for some are scared, who mark,  
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,  
Waverings of every vane with every wind,  
And wordy trucklings to the transient hour,  
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,  
And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,  
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,  
Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,  
And that which knows, but careful for itself,  
And that which knows not, ruling that which knows  
To its own harm. The goal of this great world  
Lies beyond sight; yet—if our slowly-grown  
And crown'd Republic's crowning common-sense,  
That saved her many times, not fail—their fears  
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes  
That cast them, not those gloomier which forego  
The darkness of that battle in the west  
Where all of high and holy dies away.

## ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER POEMS

### ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have  
left a chasm;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow  
wharf  
In cluster; then a moulder'd church;  
and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray  
down  
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-  
wood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.  
Here on this beach a hundred years  
ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie  
Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the  
shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-  
nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
drawn;  
And built their castles of dissolving  
sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-  
ing up  
And flying the white breaker, daily  
left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the  
cliff;

In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the  
next,  
While Annie still was mistress; but at  
times  
Enoch would hold possession for a  
week:  
'This is my house and this my little  
wife.'  
'Mine too,' said Philip; 'turn and turn  
about;'  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch  
stronger-made  
Was master. Then would Philip, his  
blue eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
tears,  
Shriek out, 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at  
this  
The little wife would weep for com-  
pany,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her  
sake,  
And say she would be little wife to  
both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-  
hood past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascend-  
ing sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his  
love,  
But Philip loved in silence; and the  
girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to  
him;  
But she loved Enoch, tho' she knew it  
not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,

To purchase his own boat, and make a  
home  
For Annie; and so prosper'd that at  
last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe <sup>50</sup>  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served  
a year  
On board a merchantman, and made  
himself  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd  
a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-  
streaming seas,  
And all men look'd upon him favor-  
ably.  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twen-  
tieth May  
He purchased his own boat, and made  
a home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway  
up  
The narrow street that clamber'd to-  
ward the mill. <sup>60</sup>

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great  
and small,  
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip  
stay'd—  
His father lying sick and needing  
him—  
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the  
hill,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood  
began  
To feather toward the hollow, saw the  
pair,  
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-  
hand,  
His large gray eyes and weather-  
beaten face <sup>70</sup>  
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip  
look'd,  
And in their eyes and faces read his  
doom;  
Then, as their faces drew together,  
groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded  
life  
Crept down into the hollows of the  
wood;  
There, while the rest were loud in  
merry-making,  
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose  
and past  
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
the bells, <sup>80</sup>  
And merrily ran the years, seven  
happy years,  
Seven happy years of health and com-  
petence,  
And mutual love and honorable toil,  
With children, first a daughter. In him  
woke,  
With his first babe's first cry, the  
noble wish  
To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
And give his child a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-  
new'd,  
When two years after came a boy to be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes, <sup>90</sup>  
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful  
seas,  
Or often journeying landward; for in  
truth  
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's  
ocean-spoil  
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
Rough-redden'd with a thousand win-  
ter gales,  
Not only to the market-cross were  
known,  
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp  
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely  
Hall,  
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's min-  
istering. <sup>100</sup>

Then came a change, as all things  
human change.  
Ten miles to northward of the narrow  
port  
Open'd a larger haven. Thither used  
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;  
And once when there, and clambering  
on a mast

In harbor, by mischance he slipt and  
fell.

A limb was broken when they lifted  
him;

And while he lay recovering there, his  
wife

Bore him another son, a sickly one.

Another hand crept too across his  
trade 110

Taking her bread and theirs; and on  
him fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing  
man,

Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and  
gloom.

He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the  
night,

To see his children leading evermore  
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,

And her he loved a beggar. Then he  
pray'd,

'Save them from this, whatever comes  
to me.'

And while he pray'd, the master of  
that ship

Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-  
chance, 120

Came, for he knew the man and valued  
him,

Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would

he go?

There yet were many weeks before she  
sail'd,

Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch  
have the place?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance  
appear'd

No graver than as when some little  
cloud

Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
And isles a light in the offing. Yet the

wife— 131

When he was gone—the children—  
what to do?

Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
plans:

To sell the boat—and yet he loved her  
well—

How many a rough sea had he weath-  
er'd in her!

He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
horse—

And yet to sell her—then with what  
she brought

Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth  
in trade

With all that seamen needed or their  
wives—

So might she keep the house while he  
was gone. 140

Should he not trade himself out yon-  
der? go

This voyage more than once? yea,  
twice or thrice—

As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
Become the master of a larger craft,

With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
Have all his pretty young ones edu-

cated,  
And pass his days in peace among his  
own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined  
all;

Then moving homeward came on An-  
nie pale,

Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-  
born. 150

Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;

Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled  
father-like,

But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he

spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden  
ring had girt

Her finger, Annie fought against his  
will;

Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a

tear, 160

Many a sad kiss by day, by night, re-  
new'd—

Sure that all evil would come out of  
it—

Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go.

He not for his own self caring, but  
 her,  
 Her and her children, let her plead in  
 vain;  
 So grieving held his will, and bore it  
 thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
 friend,  
 Bought Annie goods and stores, and  
 set his hand  
 To fit their little streetward sitting-  
 room <sup>170</sup>  
 With shelf and corner for the goods  
 and stores.  
 So all day long till Enoch's last at  
 home,  
 Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer  
 and axe,  
 Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd  
 to hear  
 Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
 and rang,  
 Till this was ended, and his careful  
 hand,—  
 The space was narrow,—having or-  
 der'd all  
 Almost as neat and close as Nature  
 packs  
 Her blossom or her seedling, paused;  
 and he,  
 Who needs would work for Annie to  
 the last, <sup>180</sup>  
 Ascending tired, heavily slept till  
 morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of  
 farewell  
 Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's  
 fears,  
 Save as his Annie's, were a laughter  
 to him.  
 Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing  
 man  
 Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-  
 tery  
 Where God-in-man is one with man-  
 in-God,  
 Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and  
 babes,  
 Whatever came to him; and then he  
 said:

'Annie, this voyage by the grace of  
 God <sup>190</sup>  
 Will bring fair weather yet to all of  
 us.  
 Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire  
 for me,  
 For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
 know it;'  
 Then lightly rocking baby's cradle,  
 'and he,  
 This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—  
 Nay—for I love him all the better for  
 it—  
 God bless him, he shall sit upon my  
 knees  
 And I will tell him tales of foreign  
 parts,  
 And make him merry, when I come  
 home again.  
 Come, Annie, come, cheer up before  
 I go.' <sup>200</sup>

Him running on thus hopefully she  
 heard,  
 And almost hoped herself; but when  
 he turn'd  
 The current of his talk to graver  
 things  
 In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
 On providence and trust in heaven,  
 she heard,  
 Heard and not heard him; as the vil-  
 lage girl,  
 Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
 spring,  
 Musing on him that used to fill it for  
 her,  
 Hears and not hears, and lets it over-  
 flow.

At length she spoke: 'O Enoch, you  
 are wise; <sup>210</sup>  
 And yet for all your wisdom well  
 know I  
 That I shall look upon your face no  
 more.'

'Well, then,' said Enoch, 'I shall  
 look on yours.  
 Annie, the ship I sail in passes here'—  
 He named the day;—'get you a sea-  
 man's glass,



Spy out my face, and laugh at all  
your fears.'

But when the last of those last  
moments came:

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,

Look to the babes, and till I come  
again

Keep everything shipshape, for I  
must go. <sup>220</sup>

And fear no more for me; or if you  
fear,

Cast all your cares on God; that  
anchor holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to  
these,

Can I go from Him? and the sea is  
His,

The sea is His; He made it.'

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping  
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little  
ones;

But for the third, the sickly one, who  
slept

After a night of feverous wakefulness, <sup>230</sup>

When Annie would have raised him  
Enoch said,

'Wake him not, let him sleep; how  
should the child

Remember this?' and kiss'd him in  
his cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead  
clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it; this he kept  
Thro' all his future, but now hastily  
caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and  
went his way.

She, when the day that Enoch mentioned  
came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain. Perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her  
eye; <sup>240</sup>

Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;

She saw him not, and while he stood  
on deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel  
past.

Even to the last dip of the vanishing  
sail

She watch'd it, and departed weeping  
for him;

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence  
as his grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with  
his,

But throve not in her trade, not being  
bred

To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of  
lies, <sup>250</sup>

Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding 'what would  
Enoch say?'

For more than once, in days of difficulty

And pressure, had she sold her wares  
for less

Than what she gave in buying what  
she sold.

She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it;  
and thus,

Expectant of that news which never  
came,

Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,

And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
and grew <sup>260</sup>

Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for  
it

With all a mother's care; nevertheless,

Whether her business often call'd her  
from it,

Or thro' the want of what it needed  
most,

Or means to pay the voice who best  
could tell

What most it needed—howsoever it  
was,

After a lingering,—ere she was  
aware,—

Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,

The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie  
 buried it, <sup>270</sup>  
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd  
 for her peace,—  
 Since Enoch left he had not look'd  
 upon her,—  
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so  
 long.  
 'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her  
 now,  
 May be some little comfort;' there-  
 fore went,  
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
 Paused for a moment at an inner  
 door,  
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one  
 opening,  
 Enter'd, but Annie, seated with her  
 grief,  
 Fresh from the burial of her little  
 one, <sup>280</sup>  
 Cared not to look on any human face,  
 But turn'd her own toward the wall  
 and wept.  
 Then Philip standing up said falter-  
 ingly,  
 'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her  
 moan'd reply,  
 'Favor from one so sad and so for-  
 lorn  
 As I am!' half abashed him; yet un-  
 ask'd,  
 His bashfulness and tenderness at  
 war,  
 He set himself beside her, saying to  
 her:

'I came to speak to you of what he  
 wish'd, <sup>290</sup>  
 Enoch, your husband. I have ever  
 said  
 You chose the best among us—a  
 strong man;  
 For where he fixt his heart he set his  
 hand  
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it  
 thro'.  
 And wherefore did he go this weary  
 way,  
 And leave you lonely? not to see the  
 world—

For pleasure?—nay, but for the  
 wherewithal  
 To give his babes a better bringing  
 up  
 Than his had been, or yours; that  
 was his wish.  
 And if he come again, vext will he  
 be <sup>300</sup>  
 To find the precious morning hours  
 were lost.  
 And it would vex him even in his  
 grave,  
 If he could know his babes were run-  
 ning wild  
 Like colts about the waste. So, An-  
 nie, now—  
 Have we not known each other all  
 our lives?  
 I do beseech you by the love you bear  
 Him and his children not to say me  
 nay—  
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes  
 again  
 Why then he shall repay me—if you  
 will,  
 Annie—for I am rich and well-to-  
 do. <sup>310</sup>  
 Now let me put the boy and girl to  
 school;  
 This is the favor that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against  
 the wall  
 Answer'd, 'I cannot look you in the  
 face;  
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
 When you came in my sorrow broke  
 me down;  
 And now I think your kindness  
 breaks me down.  
 But Enoch lives; that is borne in on  
 me;  
 He will repay you. Money can be re-  
 paid,  
 Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd, <sup>320</sup>  
 'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,  
 She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes  
 upon him,  
 And dwelt a moment on his kindly  
 face,

Then calling down a blessing on his  
head  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-  
sionately,  
And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to  
school,  
And bought them needful books, and  
every way,  
Like one who does his duty by his  
own, <sup>330</sup>  
Made himself theirs; and tho' for  
Annie's sake,  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest  
wish,  
And seldom crost her threshold, yet  
he sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs  
and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his  
wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now  
and then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the  
meal  
To save the offence of charitable,  
flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the  
waste. <sup>340</sup>

But Philip did not fathom Annie's  
mind;  
Scarce could the woman, when he  
came upon her,  
Out of a full heart and boundless  
gratitude  
Light on a broken word to thank him  
with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-  
all;  
From distant corners of the street  
they ran  
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;  
Lords of his house and of his mill  
were they,  
Worried his passive ear with petty  
wrongs  
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd  
with him <sup>350</sup>

And call'd him Father Philip. Philip  
gain'd  
As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem'd to  
them  
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where; and so  
ten years,  
Since Enoch left his hearth and na-  
tive land,  
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch  
came.

It chanced one evening Annie's  
children long'd  
To go with others nutting to the  
wood, <sup>360</sup>  
And Annie would go with them; then  
they begg'd  
For Father Philip, as they call'd him,  
too.  
Him, like the working bee in blossom-  
dust,  
Blanch'd with his mill, they found;  
and saying to him,  
'Come with us, Father Philip,' he  
denied;  
But when the children pluck'd at him  
to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to  
their wish,  
For was not Annie with them? and  
they went.

But after scaling half the weary  
down,  
Just where the prone edge of the  
wood began <sup>370</sup>  
To feather toward the hollow, all her  
force  
Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest,'  
she said.  
So Philip rested with her well-con-  
tent;  
While all the younger ones with jubi-  
lant cries  
Broke from their elders, and tumultu-  
ously  
Down thro' the whitening hazels  
made a plunge  
To the bottom, and dispersed, and  
bent or broke

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

The lithe reluctant boughs to tear  
away  
Their tawny clusters, crying to each  
other  
And calling, here and there, about the  
wood. 380

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
Her presence, and remember'd one  
dark hour  
Here in this wood, when like a  
wounded life  
He crept into the shadow. At last he  
said,  
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen,  
Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in  
the wood.  
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak  
a word.  
'Tired?' but her face had fallen upon  
her hands;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in  
him,  
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship  
was lost! 390  
No more of that! why should you kill  
yourself  
And make them orphans quite?' And  
Annie said,  
'I thought not of it; but—I know not  
why—  
Their voices make me feel so soli-  
tary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat  
closer spoke:  
'Annie, there is a thing upon my  
mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so  
long  
That, tho' I know not when it first  
came there,  
I know that it will out at last. O  
Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all  
chance, 400  
That he who left you ten long years  
ago  
Should still be living; well, then—let  
me speak.  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting  
help;

I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless—they say that women are so  
quick—  
Perhaps you know what I would have  
you know—  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would  
prove  
A father to your children; I do think  
They love me as a father; I am sure  
That I love them as if they were  
mine own; 410  
And I believe, if you were fast my  
wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain  
years  
We might be still as happy as God  
grants  
To any of his creatures. Think upon  
it;  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
No burthen, save my care for you and  
yours,  
And we have known each other all  
our lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you  
know.'

Then answer'd Annie—tenderly she  
spoke:  
'You have been as God's good angel  
in our house. 420  
God bless you for it, God reward you  
for it,  
Philip, with something happier than  
myself.  
Can one love twice? can you be ever  
loved  
As Enoch was? what is it that you  
ask?'  
'I am content,' he answer'd, 'to be  
loved  
A little after Enoch.' 'O,' she cried,  
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a  
while.  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not  
come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long.  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year. 430  
O, wait a little!' Philip sadly said,  
'Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay,' she  
cried,

'I am bound: you have my promise—  
in a year.  
Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine?'  
And Philip answer'd, 'I will bide my  
year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip  
glancing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen  
day  
Pass from the Danish barrow over-  
head;  
Then, fearing night and chill for An-  
nie, rose <sup>440</sup>  
And sent his voice beneath him thro'  
the wood.  
Up came the children laden with their  
spoil;  
Then all descended to the port. and  
there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave  
his hand,  
Saying gently, 'Annie, when I spoke  
to you,  
That was your hour of weakness. I  
was wrong,  
I am always bound to you, but you  
are free.'  
Then Annie weeping answer'd, 'I am  
bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as  
it were,  
While yet she went about her house-  
hold ways, <sup>450</sup>  
Even as she dwelt upon his latest  
words,  
That he had loved her longer than she  
knew,  
That autumn into autumn flash'd  
again,  
And there he stood once more before  
her face,  
Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?'  
she ask'd.  
'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe  
again;  
Come out and see.' But she—she put  
him off—  
So much to look to—such a change—  
a month—

Give her a month—she knew that she  
was bound—  
A month—no more. Then Philip with  
his eyes <sup>460</sup>  
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his  
voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's  
hand,  
'Take your own time, Annie, take  
your own time.'  
And Annie could have wept for pity  
of him;  
And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce-believable ex-  
cuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-suf-  
ferance,  
Till half another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost, <sup>470</sup>  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but  
trifle with her;  
Some that she but held off to draw  
him on;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip  
too,  
As simple folk that knew not their own  
minds;  
And one, in whom all evil fancies  
clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
Would hint at worse in either. Her  
own son  
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his  
wish;  
But evermore the daughter prest upon  
her <sup>480</sup>  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting  
grew  
Careworn and wan; and all these  
things fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but  
earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign, 'My Enoch, is he  
gone?'

Then compass'd round by the blind  
 wall of night  
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of  
 her heart,  
 Started from bed, and struck herself  
 a light,  
 Then desperately seized the holy  
 Book,  
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
 'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her,  
 No meaning there; she closed the  
 Book and slept.  
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a  
 height,  
 Under a palm-tree, over him the sun.  
 'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy,  
 he is singing  
 Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines  
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these  
 be palms  
 Whereof the happy people strowing  
 cried  
 "Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she  
 woke,  
 Resolved, sent for him and said wildly  
 to him,  
 'There is no reason why we should not  
 wed.'  
 'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd,  
 'both our sakes,  
 So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
 the bells,  
 Merrily rang the bells, and they were  
 wed.  
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her  
 path,  
 She knew not whence; a whisper on  
 her ear,  
 She knew not what; nor loved she to  
 be left  
 Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
 What ail'd her then that, ere she enter'd,  
 often  
 Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the  
 latch,  
 Fearing to enter? Philip thought he  
 knew:

Such doubts and fears were common  
 to her state,  
 Being with child; but when her child  
 was born,  
 Then her new child was as herself re-  
 new'd,  
 Then the new mother came about her  
 heart,  
 Then her good Philip was her all-in-  
 all,  
 And that mysterious instinct wholly  
 died.

And where was Enoch? Prosperously sail'd  
 The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting forth  
 The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
 shook  
 And almost overwhelm'd her, yet un-  
 vexed  
 She slipt across the summer of the  
 world,  
 Then after a long tumble about the  
 Cape  
 And frequent interchange of foul and  
 fair,  
 She passing thro' the summer world  
 again,  
 The breath of heaven came continually  
 And sent her sweetly by the golden  
 isles,  
 Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself,  
 and bought  
 Quaint monsters for the market of  
 those times,  
 A gilded dragon also for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at  
 first indeed  
 Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by  
 day,  
 Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-  
 head  
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from  
 her bows:  
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
 variable,  
 Then baffling, a long course of them;  
 and last

Storm, such as drove her under moon-  
less heavens  
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers'  
came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the  
night,  
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and  
broken spars,  
These drifted, stranding on an isle at  
morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-  
nance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-  
ishing roots;  
Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was  
tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-  
gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves  
of palm, a hut,  
Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
three,  
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-con-  
tent.  
For one, the youngest, hardly more  
than boy,  
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
wreck,  
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-  
in-life.  
They could not leave him. After he  
was gone,  
The two remaining found a fallen  
stem;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of him-  
self,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,  
fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived  
alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's  
warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak,  
the lawns  
And winding glades high up like ways  
to heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of  
bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
That coil'd around the stately stems,  
and ran  
Even to the limit of the land, the  
glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the  
world,—  
All these he saw; but what he fain had  
seen  
He could not see, the kindly human  
face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but  
heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-  
fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on  
the reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees that  
branch'd  
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the  
sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the  
wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all  
day long  
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a  
sail.  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and preci-  
pices;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east;  
The blaze upon his island overhead;  
The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
Then the great stars that globed them-  
selves in heaven,  
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and  
again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no  
sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd  
to watch,  
So still the golden lizard on him  
paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms  
moved

Before him haunting him, or he himself  
 Moved haunting people, things, and places, known <sup>600</sup>  
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line;  
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,  
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,  
 The peacock yew-tree and the lonely Hall,  
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill  
 November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,  
 The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,  
 And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
 Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away— <sup>610</sup>  
 He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up  
 Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle  
 Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
 Spoken with That which being everywhere  
 Lets none who speaks with Him seem all alone,  
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
 The sunny and rainy seasons came and went  
 Year after year. His hopes to see his own, <sup>620</sup>  
 And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
 Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom  
 Came suddenly to an end. Another ship—  
 She wanted water—blown by baffling winds,  
 Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her destined course.

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay;  
 For since the mate had seen at early dawn  
 Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
 The silent water slipping from the hills,  
 They sent a crew that landing burst away <sup>630</sup>  
 In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores  
 With clamor. Downward from his mountain gorge  
 Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded solitary,  
 Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,  
 Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like it seem'd,  
 With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
 They knew not what; and yet he led the way  
 To where the rivulets of sweet water ran,  
 And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
 And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue <sup>640</sup>  
 Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;  
 Whom, when their casks were fill'd, they took aboard.  
 And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
 Scarce-credited at first but more and more,  
 Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it;  
 And clothes they gave him and free passage home,  
 But oft he work'd among the rest and shook  
 His isolation from him. None of these  
 Came from his country, or could answer him,  
 If question'd, aught of what he cared to know. <sup>650</sup>  
 And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
 The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but ever more  
 His fancy fled before the lazy wind



Returning, till beneath a clouded  
moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
breath  
Of England, blown across her ghostly  
wall.  
And that same morning officers and  
men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him  
it; <sup>660</sup>  
Then moving up the coast they landed  
him,  
Even in that harbor whence he sail'd  
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any  
one,  
But homeward—home—what home?  
had he a home?—  
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that  
afternoon,  
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either  
chasm,  
Where either haven open'd on the  
deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the  
world in gray,  
Cut off the length of highway on be-  
fore,  
And left but narrow breadth to left  
and right <sup>670</sup>  
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping  
haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore  
it down.  
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the  
gloom;  
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted  
light  
Flared on him, and he came upon the  
place.

Then down the long street having  
slowly stolen,  
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd  
the home <sup>680</sup>  
Where Annie lived and loved him, and  
his babes

In those far-off seven happy years  
were born;  
But finding neither light nor murmur  
there—  
A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle  
—crept  
Still downward thinking, 'dead or dead  
to me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf  
he went,  
Seeking a tavern which of old he  
knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone; but he  
was gone <sup>690</sup>  
Who kept it, and his widow Miriam  
Lane,  
With daily-dwindling profits held the  
house;  
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but  
now  
Still, with yet a bed for wandering  
men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and gar-  
rulous,  
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the  
port,  
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown,  
so bow'd, <sup>699</sup>  
So broken—all the story of his house:  
His baby's death, her growing pov-  
erty,  
How Philip put her little ones to  
school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing  
her,  
Her slow consent and marriage, and  
the birth  
Of Philip's child; and o'er his counte-  
nance  
No shadow past, nor motion. Any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the  
tale  
Less than the teller; only when she  
closed,  
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and  
lost,' <sup>709</sup>  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,

Repeated muttering, 'cast away and  
lost;'  
Again in deeper inward whispers,  
'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
again:  
'If I might look on her sweet face  
again,  
And know that she is happy.' So the  
thought  
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,  
At evening when the dull November  
day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the  
hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all be-  
low;  
There did a thousand memories roll  
upon him, 720  
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable  
light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,  
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-  
lures  
The bird of passage, till he madly  
strikes  
Against it and beats out his weary  
life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,  
The latest house to landward; but be-  
hind,  
With one small gate that open'd on the  
waste,  
Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd, 730  
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yew-tree, and all round it ran a walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it.  
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk  
and stole  
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and  
thence  
That which he better might have  
shunn'd, if griefs  
Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board  
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the  
hearth;  
And on the right hand of the hearth  
he saw 740  
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees;  
And o'er her second father stooped a  
girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her  
lifted hand  
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his  
creasy arms,  
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd;  
And on the left hand of the hearth he  
saw  
The mother glancing often toward her  
babe, 750  
But turning now and then to speak  
with him,  
Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,  
And saying that which pleased him,  
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to  
life beheld  
His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe  
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's  
knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the  
happiness,  
And his own children tall and beauti-  
ful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his  
place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love— 760  
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told  
him all,  
Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the  
branch, and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible  
cry,

Which in one moment, like the blast  
of doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a  
thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate  
underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and  
be found, <sup>770</sup>  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-  
door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he  
dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd:

'Too hard to bear! why did they  
take me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,  
Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely  
isle, <sup>779</sup>  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me  
strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her  
peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to  
these?  
They know me not. I should betray  
myself.  
Never! no father's kiss for me—the  
girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my  
son.'

There speech and thought and na-  
ture fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose  
and paced <sup>789</sup>  
Back toward his solitary home again,

All down the long and narrow street  
he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her  
know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
more  
Prayer from a living source within the  
will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter  
world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the  
sea,  
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's  
wife,' <sup>800</sup>  
He said to Miriam, 'that you spoke  
about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives?'  
'Ay, ay, poor soul,' said Miriam, 'fear  
enow!  
If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,  
Why, that would be her comfort;' and  
he thought,  
'After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
know,  
I wait His time;' and Enoch set him-  
self,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to  
live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his  
hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and  
wrought <sup>810</sup>  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd  
At lading and unlading the tall barks  
That brought the stinted commerce of  
those days,  
Thus earn'd a scanty living for him-  
self.  
Yet since he did but labor for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life  
in it  
Whereby the man could live; and as  
the year  
Roll'd itself round again to meet the  
day

When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
came <sup>819</sup>  
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do  
no more,  
But kept the house, his chair, and last  
his bed.  
And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-  
fully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck  
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting  
squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life  
approach  
To save the life despair'd of, than he  
saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close  
of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a  
kindlier hope <sup>829</sup>  
On Enoch thinking, 'after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I loved her to the  
last.'  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and  
said:  
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the  
book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'  
'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman,  
'hear him talk!  
I warrant, man, that we shall bring  
you round.'  
'Swear,' added Enoch sternly, 'on the  
book;'  
And on the book, half-frighted, Mir-  
iam swore.  
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon  
her, <sup>840</sup>  
'Did you know Enoch Arden of this  
town?'  
'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far  
away.  
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the  
street;  
Held his head high, and cared for no  
man, he.'  
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:  
'His head is low, and no man cares for  
him.

I think I have not three days more to  
live;  
I am the man.' At which the woman  
gave  
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical  
cry:  
'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was  
a foot <sup>850</sup>  
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again:  
'My God has bow'd me down to what  
I am;  
My grief and solitude have broken  
me;  
Nevertheless, know you that I am he  
Who married—but that name has  
twice been changed—  
I married her who married Philip Ray.  
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his  
voyage,  
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming  
back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman  
heard, <sup>860</sup>  
Fast flow'd the current of her easy  
tears,  
While in her heart she yearn'd inces-  
santly  
To rush abroad all round the little  
haven,  
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his  
woes;  
But awed and promise-bounden she  
forbore,  
Saying only, 'See your bairns before  
you go!  
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and  
arose  
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch  
hung  
A moment on her words, but then re-  
plied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the  
last, <sup>870</sup>  
But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
Sit down again; mark me and under-  
stand,  
While I have power to speak. I charge  
you now,  
When you shall see her, tell her that I  
died

Blessing her, praying for her, loving  
 her;  
 Save for the bar between us, loving  
 her  
 As when she laid her head beside my  
 own.  
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I  
 saw  
 So like her mother, that my latest  
 breath  
 Was spent in blessing her and praying  
 for her. <sup>880</sup>  
 And tell my son that I died blessing  
 him.  
 And say to Philip that I blest him too;  
 He never meant us anything but good.  
 But if my children care to see me  
 dead,  
 Who hardly knew me living, let them  
 come,  
 I am their father; but she must not  
 come,  
 For my dead face would vex her after-  
 life.  
 And now there is but one of all my  
 blood  
 Who will embrace me in the world-  
 to-be.  
 This hair is his, she cut it off and gave  
 it, <sup>890</sup>  
 And I have borne it with me all these  
 years,  
 And thought to bear it with me to my  
 grave;  
 But now my mind is changed, for I  
 shall see him,  
 My babe in bliss. Wherefore when I  
 am gone,  
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort  
 her;  
 It will moreover be a token to her  
 That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane  
 Made such a voluble answer promis-  
 ing all,  
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon  
 her  
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once  
 again <sup>900</sup>  
 She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless  
 and pale,  
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed at in-  
 tervals,  
 There came so loud a calling of the sea  
 That all the houses in the haven rang.  
 He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
 abroad,  
 Crying with a loud voice, 'A sail! a  
 sail!  
 I am saved;' and so fell back and  
 spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
 And when they buried him the little  
 port <sup>910</sup>  
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

## AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames; and, gilded  
 dust, our pride  
 Looks only for a moment whole and  
 sound,  
 Like that long-buried body of the  
 king,  
 Found lying with his urns and orna-  
 ments,  
 Which at a touch of light, an air of  
 heaven,  
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no  
 more.

Here is a story which in rougher  
 shape  
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I  
 saw  
 Sunning himself in a waste field  
 alone—  
 Old, and a mine of memories—who  
 had served, <sup>10</sup>  
 Long since, a bygone rector of the  
 place,  
 And been himself a part of what he  
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty  
 man,  
 The county God—in whose capacious  
 hall,

Hung with a hundred shields, the  
 family tree  
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
 king—  
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd  
 the spire,  
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his  
 entry-gates,  
 And swang besides on many a windy  
 sign—  
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal  
 head 20  
 Saw from his windows nothing save  
 his own—  
 What lovelier of his own had he than  
 her,  
 His only child, his Edith, whom he  
 loved  
 As heiress and not heir regretfully?  
 But 'he that marries her marries her  
 name.'  
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself  
 and wife,  
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
 Insipid as the queen upon a card;  
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
 more 29  
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
 corn,  
 Little about it stirring save a brook!  
 A sleepy land, where under the same  
 wheel

■ The same old rut would deepen year  
 by year;  
 Where almost all the village had one  
 name;  
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the  
 Hall  
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
 Thrice over; so that rectory and Hall,  
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
 Were open to each other; tho' to  
 dream 40  
 That Love could bind them closer well  
 had made  
 The hoar hair of the baronet bristle up  
 With horror, worse than had he heard  
 his priest  
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of  
 men,

Daughters of God; so sleepy was the  
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
 it so,  
 Somewhere beneath his own low range  
 of roofs,  
 Have also set his many-shielded tree?  
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
 once,  
 When the red rose was redder than  
 itself, 50  
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-  
 caster's,  
 With wounded peace which each had  
 prick'd to death.  
 'Not proven,' Averill said, or laugh-  
 ingly,  
 'Some other race of Averills'—proven  
 or no,  
 What cared he? what, if other or the  
 same?  
 He lean'd not on his fathers but him-  
 self.  
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
 With Averill, and a year or two before  
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
 By one low voice to one dear neigh-  
 borhood, 60  
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
 claim  
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing  
 him.

Sanguine he was; a but less vivid  
 hue  
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-  
 bloom  
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,  
 that still  
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
 beam'd,  
 Beneath a mane-like mass of rolling  
 gold,  
 Their best and brightest when they  
 dwelt on hers,  
 Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect  
 else, 70  
 But subject to the season or the mood,  
 Shone like a mystic star between the  
 less  
 And greater glory varying to and fro,

We know not wherefore; bounteously  
     made,  
 And yet so finely, that a troublous  
     touch  
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in  
     a day,  
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
 And these had been together from the  
     first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years  
     after, hers.  
 So much the boy foreran; but when  
     his date <sup>80</sup>  
 Doubled her own, for want of play-  
     mates, he—  
 Since Averill was a deced and a half  
 His elder, and their parents under-  
     ground—  
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite,  
     and roll'd  
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her  
     dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the prone  
     swing,  
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
     ranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept  
     it green  
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
     grass, <sup>90</sup>  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
 The petty mare's-tail forest, fairy  
     pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows  
     aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting, make-  
     believes  
 For Edith and himself; or else he  
     forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
     wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and  
     true love  
 Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and  
     faint, <sup>100</sup>  
 But where a passion yet unborn per-  
     haps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the night-  
     ingale.

And thus together, save for college-  
     times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
     grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden  
     woman-grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill; there,  
     when first <sup>109</sup>  
 The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer  
     spears  
 That soon should wear the garland;  
     there again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd;  
     lastly there  
 At Christmas; ever welcome at the  
     Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
     youth  
 Broke with a phosphorescence charm-  
     ing even  
 My lady, and the baronet yet had laid  
 No bar between them. Dull and self-  
     involved,  
 Tall and erect, but bending from his  
     height  
 With half-allowing smiles for all the  
     world, <sup>120</sup>  
 And mighty courteous in the main—  
     his pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his  
     ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walk-  
     ing with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's,  
     when they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Two-footed at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third; and how  
     should Love,  
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four  
     chance-met eyes  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, fol-  
     low <sup>130</sup>  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
 Seldom, but when he does, master of  
     all.

So these young hearts, not knowing  
     that they loved,

Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
 Between them, nor by plight or broken  
     ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
 By Averill; his, a brother's love, that  
     hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er  
     her peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leo-  
     lin's—<sup>140</sup>  
 Who knows? but so they wander'd,  
     hour by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that re-bloom'd,  
     and drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to her-  
     self.  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the  
     brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence,  
     ran  
 By sallowy rims, arose the laborers'  
     homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low  
     knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other,  
     huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
     bloom.<sup>150</sup>  
 Her art, her hand, her counsel, all had  
     wrought  
 About them. Here was one that, sum-  
     mer-blanch'd,  
 Was parcel-bearded with the travel-  
     ler's-joy  
 In autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
 The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
     hearth  
 Broke from a bower of vine and  
     honeysuckle.  
 One look'd all rose-tree, and another  
     wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with  
     stars.  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
 About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions in the Northern dream-  
     er's heavens,<sup>161</sup>  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted  
     eaves

A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
 Each, its own charm; and Edith's  
     everywhere;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him,  
 He but less loved than Edith, of her  
     poor.  
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so lov-  
     ing,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal  
     hand  
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she  
     past,<sup>170</sup>  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and pass-  
     ing by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a  
     height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a  
     voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor  
     roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than  
     themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;  
 He, loved for her and for himself. A  
     grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the  
     heart,<sup>180</sup>  
 A childly way with children, and a  
     laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage  
     true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy  
     realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the  
     girl,  
 Nursing a child, and turning to the  
     warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-  
     soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper,  
     'Bless,  
 God bless 'em! marriages are made in  
     heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to  
     her.  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unan-  
     nounced<sup>190</sup>  
 With half a score of swarthy faces  
     came.



His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,  
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;  
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,  
Tho' seeming boastful. So when first he dash'd

Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
Of patron, 'Good! my lady's kinsman!  
good!' 198

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
To listen; unawares they flitted off,  
Busyng themselves about the flower-age

That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,

The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
Once with this kinsman, ah! so long ago,

Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days.

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him

Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life; 209

Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye,  
Hated him with a momentary hate.

Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he.

I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd

His oriental gifts on every one

And most on Edith. Like a storm he came,

And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her—possibly

He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return

When others had been tested—there was one,

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it 220

Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself

Fine as ice-ferns on January panes

Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as he told

The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves

He got it; for their captain after fight,  
His comrades having fought their last

below,  
Was climbing up the valley, at whom he shot.

Down from the beetling crag to which he clung 229

Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
This dagger with him, which, when

now admired  
By Edith whom his pleasure was to

please,  
At once the costly Sahib yielded to

her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,

Tost over all her presents petulantly;  
And when she show'd the wealthy

scabbard, saying,  
'Look what a lovely piece of work-

manship!'  
Slight was his answer, 'Well—I care

not for it.'  
Then playing with the blade he prick'd

his hand, 239  
'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'

'But would it be more gracious,' ask'd the girl,

'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No,' said

he.  
'Me?—but I cared not for it. O, pardon me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'  
'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho' his

gift;  
For I am more ungracious even than

you,  
I care not for it either;' and he said,

'Why, then I love it,' but Sir Aylmer past,

And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard. 250

The next day came a neighbor.  
Blues and reds

They talk'd of; blues were sure of it,  
 he thought;  
 Then of the latest fox—where started  
 —kill'd  
 In such a bottom. 'Peter had the  
 brush,  
 My Peter, first;' and did Sir Aylmer  
 know  
 That great pock-pitted fellow had  
 been caught?  
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
 hand,  
 And rolling as it were the substance  
 of it  
 Between his palms a moment up and  
 down—  
 'The birds were warm, the birds were  
 warm upon him; 260  
 We have him now;' and had Sir  
 Aylmer heard—  
 Nay, but he must—the land was ring-  
 ing of it—  
 This blacksmith border-marriage—  
 one they knew—  
 Raw from the nursery—who could  
 trust a child?  
 That cursed France with her egalities!  
 And did Sir Aylmer—deferentially  
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent  
 —think—  
 For people talk'd—that it was wholly  
 wise  
 To let that handsome fellow Averill  
 walk  
 So freely with his daughter? people  
 talk'd— 270  
 The boy might get a notion into him;  
 The girl might be entangled ere she  
 knew  
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
 spoke:  
 'The girl and boy, sir, know their dif-  
 ferences!'  
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!'  
 and he, 'Enough,  
 More than enough, sir! I can guard  
 my own.'  
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
 house

Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
 night;  
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a  
 rough piece 280  
 Of early rigid color, under which  
 Withdrawing by the counter door to  
 that  
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back  
 upon him  
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as  
 one  
 Caught in a burst of unexpected  
 storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the  
 House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant;  
 her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather  
 fan,  
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd, 290  
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breath-  
 ing hard.  
 'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,  
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with  
 her,  
 The sole succeder to their wealth,  
 their lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their  
 house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient  
 name,  
 Their child,' 'Our child!' 'Our heiress!'  
 'Ours!' for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,  
 came  
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said:  
 'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are  
 to make. 300  
 I swear you shall not make them out  
 of mine.  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised  
 on her,  
 Perplex her, made her half forget  
 herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and  
 us—  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impos-  
 sible,  
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that  
 this—

Else I withdraw favor and countenance  
 From you and yours for ever—shall  
 you do,  
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall  
 not see her—  
 No, you shall write, and not to her, but  
 me; <sup>310</sup>  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,  
 And after look'd into yourself, you  
 find  
 That you meant nothing—as indeed  
 you know  
 That you meant nothing. Such a match  
 as this!  
 Impossible, prodigious!' These were  
 words,  
 As meted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,  
 'I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her!  
 Never, O, never!' for about as long <sup>320</sup>  
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
 crying,  
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like  
 a dog;  
 Hence!' with a sudden execration  
 drove  
 The footstool from before him, and  
 arose;  
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of  
 teeth that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin  
 still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old  
 man <sup>330</sup>  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel  
 stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary  
 face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,  
 but now,  
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd  
 moon,

Vext with anworthy madness, and de-  
 form'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rage-  
 ful eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'  
 the land,  
 Went Leolin; then, his passions all in  
 flood <sup>339</sup>  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,  
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
 ear;  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed:  
 The man was his, had been his father's  
 friend;  
 He must have seen, himself had seen  
 it long;  
 He must have known, himself had  
 known; besides,  
 He never yet had set his daughter  
 forth  
 Here in the woman-markets of the  
 west,  
 Where our Caucasians let themselves  
 be sold.  
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
 Leolin to him. <sup>350</sup>  
 'Brother, for I have loved you more  
 as son  
 Than brother, let me tell you: I my-  
 self—  
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is  
 it?  
 Jilted I was; I say it for your peace.  
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
 shame  
 The woman should have borne, humili-  
 ated,  
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life;  
 Till after our good parents past away  
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again  
 to grow. <sup>359</sup>  
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you.  
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
 Loves you; I know her; the worst  
 thought she has  
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand.

She must prove true; for, brother,  
 where two fight  
 The strongest wins, and truth and love  
 are strength,  
 And you are happy; let her parents  
 be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon  
 them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,  
 wealth,

Their wealth, their heiress! wealth  
 enough was theirs

For twenty matches. Were he lord of  
 this, 370

Why, twenty boys and girls should  
 marry on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and  
 himself

Be wealthy still, ay, wealthier. He be-  
 lieved

This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-  
 mon made

The harlot of the cities; Nature crost  
 Was mother of the foul adulteries

That saturate soul with body. Name,  
 too! name,

Their ancient name! they *might* be  
 proud; its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah, how pale she  
 had look'd

Darling, tonight! they must have rated  
 her 380

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheas-  
 ant-lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thou-  
 sand years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
 doing nothing

Since Egbert—why, the greater their  
 disgrace!

Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in  
 that!

Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler?  
 fools,

With such a vantage-ground for noble-  
 ness!

He had known a man, a quintessence  
 of man,

The life of all—who madly loved—  
 and he,

Thwarted by one of these old father-  
 fools, 390

Had rioted his life out, and made an  
 end.

He would not do it! her sweet face  
 and faith

Held him from that; but he had pow-  
 ers, he knew it.

Back would he to his studies, make a  
 name,

Name, fortune too; the world should  
 ring of him,

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in  
 their graves.

Chancellor, or what is greatest would  
 he be—

'O brother, I am grieved to learn your  
 grief—

Give me my fling, and let me say my  
 say.'

At which, like one that sees his own  
 excess, 400

And easily forgives it as his own,  
 He laugh'd, and then was mute, but

presently  
 Wept like a storm; and honest Ave-  
 rill, seeing

How low his brother's mood had  
 fallen, fetch'd

His richest bee's-wing from a binn re-  
 served

For banquets, praised the waning red,  
 and told

The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came  
 of age—

Then drank and past it; till at length  
 the two,

Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,  
 agreed

That much allowance must be made  
 for men. 410

After an angry dream this kindlier  
 glow

Faded with morning, but his purpose  
 held.

Yet once by night again the lovers  
 met,

A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
 That darken'd all the northward of

her Hall.

Him, to her meek and modest bosom  
 prest

In agony, she promised that no force,

Persuasion, no, nor death could alter  
her;

He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labor for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity <sup>421</sup>  
He should not be rejected. 'Write to  
me!

They loved me, and because I love  
their child

They hate me. There is war between  
us, dear,

Which breaks all bonds but ours; we  
must remain

Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort. The  
wind blew,

The rain of heaven and their own bit-  
ter tears,

Tears and the careless rain of heaven,  
mixt

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each  
other <sup>430</sup>

In darkness, and above them roar'd  
the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-  
selves

To learn a language known but smat-  
teringly

In phrases here and there at random,  
toil'd

Mastering the lawless science of our  
law,

That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,

Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune  
led,

May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.

The jests, that flash'd about the plead-  
er's room, <sup>440</sup>

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
scurrilous tale,—

Old scandals buried now seven decads  
deep

In other scandals that have lived and  
died,

And left the living scandal that shall  
die—

Were dead to him already; bent as he  
was

To make disproof of scorn, and strong  
in hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labor he,  
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-  
cise,

Except when for a breathing-while at  
eve,

Some niggard fraction of an hour, he  
ran <sup>450</sup>

Beside the river-bank. And then in-  
deed

Harder the times were, and the hands  
of power

Were bloodier, and the according  
hearts of men

Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-  
breeze,

Which fann'd the gardens of that rival  
rose

Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
His former talks with Edith, on him  
breathed

Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with  
air,

Then to his books again. My lady's  
cousin, <sup>460</sup>

Half-sickening of his pension'd after-  
noon,

Drove in upon the student once or  
twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the  
times,

Had golden hopes for France and all  
mankind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at  
home

With a heaved shoulder and a saucy  
smile,

And fain had haled him out into the  
world,

And air'd him there. His nearer friend  
would say,

'Screw not the chord too sharply lest  
it snap.'

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger  
forth <sup>470</sup>

From where his worldless heart had  
kept it warm,

Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
him

Approvingly, and prophesied his rise;  
For heart, I think, help'd head. Her  
letters too,

Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she  
     found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly  
     watch'd,  
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth  
     till he saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon  
     him. 480

But they that cast her spirit into  
     flesh,  
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued  
     themselves  
 To sell her, those good parents, for  
     her good.  
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or  
     wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him  
     they lured  
 Into their net made pleasant by the  
     baits  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to  
     woo.  
 So month by month the noise about  
     their doors,  
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-  
     quets, made  
 The nightly wirer of their innocent  
     hare 490  
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, re-  
     turn'd  
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the  
     wind  
 With rumor, and became in other  
     fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords. But those  
     at home,  
 As hunters round a hunted creature  
     draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward  
     the death, 500  
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings  
     in;  
 Forbade her first the house of Ave-  
     rill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealth-  
     ier farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the  
     poor  
 They barr'd her. Yet she bore it, yet  
     her cheek  
 Kept color—wondrous! but, O mys-  
     tery!  
 What amulet drew her down to that  
     old oak,  
 So old, that twenty years before, a  
     part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of  
     John—  
 Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree,  
     but now 510  
 The broken base of a black tower, a  
     cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-  
     ing spray.  
 There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-  
     dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-  
     trove;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and  
     read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for  
     which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emis-  
     sary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to  
     fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and  
     halter gave 520  
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish  
     wits  
 The letter which he brought, and  
     swore besides  
 To play their go-between as hereto-  
     fore  
 Nor let them know themselves be-  
     tray'd; and then,  
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
     went  
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-  
     able.

Thenceforward oft from out a des-  
     pot dream  
 The father panting woke, and oft, as  
     dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his  
     elms,

Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue  
brush'd 530

Thro' the dim meadow toward his  
treasure-trove,  
Seized it, took home, and to my lady,  
—who made

A downward crescent of her minion  
mouth,

Listless in all despondence,—read;  
and tore,

As if the living passion symbol'd there  
Were living nerves to feel the rent;  
and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self de-  
fied,

Now striking on huge stumbling-  
blocks of scorn

In babyisms and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary 540

Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at  
last

Hopeless of answer. Then tho' Averill  
wrote

And bade him with good heart sustain  
himself—

All would be well—the lover heeded  
not,

But passionately restless came and  
went,

And rustling once at night about the  
place,

There by a keeper shot at, slightly  
hurt,

Raging return'd. Nor was it well for  
her

Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
pines, 550

Watch'd even there; and one was set  
to watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings. Once  
indeed,

Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
in her,

She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her ten-  
derly,

Not knowing what possess'd him.  
That one kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon  
earth;

Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,

Seem'd hope's returning rose; and  
then ensued 559

A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
Or ordeal by kindness. After this  
He seldom crost his child without a  
sneer;

The mother flow'd in shallower acri-  
monies,

Never one kindly smile, one kindly  
word;

So that the gentle creature shut from  
all

Her charitable use, and face to face  
With twenty months of silence, slowly  
lost,

Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on  
life.

Last some low fever ranging round to  
spy 569

The weakness of a people or a house,  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,  
or men,

Or almost all that is, hurting the  
hurt—

Save Christ as we believe him—found  
the girl

And flung her down upon a couch of  
fire,

Where careless of the household faces  
near,

And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
past.

Star to star vibrates light; may  
soul to soul

Strike thro' a finer element of her  
own?

So,—from afar,—touch as at once?  
or why 580

That night, that moment, when she  
named his name,

Did the keen shriek, 'Yes, love, yes,  
Edith, yes,'

Shrill, till the comrade of his cham-  
bers woke,

And came upon him half-arisen from  
sleep,

With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
trembling,

His hair as it were crackling into  
flames,

His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a flyer.  
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry;  
 589  
 And being much befool'd and idioted  
 By the rough amity of the other, sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with death  
 Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
 Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's blood;  
 'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.  
 And when he came again, his flock believed—  
 600  
 Beholding how the years which are not Time's  
 Had blasted him—that many thousand days  
 Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,  
 And being used to find her pastor texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him  
 To speak before the people of her child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose.  
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods  
 610  
 Was all the life of it; for hard on these,  
 A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens  
 Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof  
 Sent out a listener. Many too had known

Edith among the hamlets round, and since  
 The parents' harshness and the hapless loves  
 And double death were widely murmur'd, left  
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,  
 To hear him; all in mourning these, and those  
 With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove,  
 620  
 Or kerchief; while the church,—one night, except  
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,—made  
 Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd  
 Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,  
 His face magnetic to the hand from which  
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'  
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse, 'Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you desolate!' But lapsed into so long a pause again  
 As half amazed, half frightened, all his flock;  
 631  
 Then from his height and loneliness of grief  
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry heart  
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,  
 And all but those who knew the living God—  
 Eight that were left to make a purer world—  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought  
 639  
 Such waste and havoc as the idolatries  
 Which from the low light of mortality  
 Shot up their shadows to the heaven of heavens,



And worshipt their own darkness in  
 the Highest?  
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy  
 brute Baäl,  
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
 For with thy worst self hast thou  
 clothed thy God.  
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
 Baäl.  
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely  
 now  
 The wilderness shall blossom as the  
 rose.  
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship  
 thine own lusts!— 650  
 No coarse and blockish God of acre-  
 age  
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel  
 to—  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble  
 groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and  
 flowing lawns,  
 And heaps of living gold that daily  
 grow,  
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous her-  
 aldries.  
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
 God.  
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*;  
 for thine 658  
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
 Is wounded to the death that cannot  
 die;  
 And tho' thou numberest with the fol-  
 lowers  
 Of One who cried, "Leave all and fol-  
 low me."  
 Thee therefore with His light about  
 thy feet,  
 Thee with His message ringing in thine  
 ears,  
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord  
 from heaven,  
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
 Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the  
 Mighty God,  
 Count the more base idolater of the  
 two; 670  
 Crueller, as not passing thro' the fire  
 Bodies, but souls—thy children's—  
 thro' the smoke,  
 The blight of low desires—darkening  
 thine own  
 To thine own likeness; or if one of  
 these,  
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight  
 and fair—  
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a  
 one  
 By those who most have cause to sor-  
 row for her—  
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of  
 corn, 680  
 Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she  
 seem'd,  
 Who entering fill'd the house with  
 sudden light.  
 For so mine own was brighten'd—  
 where indeed  
 The roof so lowly but that beam of  
 heaven  
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
 whose the babe  
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
 of shame,  
 The common care whom no one cared  
 for, leapt  
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten  
 heart,  
 As with the mother he had never  
 known, 690  
 In gambols; for her fresh and inno-  
 cent eyes  
 Had such a star of morning in their  
 blue,  
 That all neglected places of the field  
 Broke into nature's music when they  
 saw her.  
 Low was her voice, but won mysteri-  
 ous way  
 Thro' the sealed ear to which a louder  
 one  
 Was all but silence—free of alms her  
 hand—  
 The hand that robbed your cottage-  
 walls with flowers  
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little  
 ones;

How often placed upon the sick man's  
 brow<sup>700</sup>  
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverish pillow  
 smooth!  
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
 not?  
 One burthen and she would not lighten  
 it?  
 One spiritual doubt she did not  
 soothe?  
 Or when some heat of difference  
 sparkled out,  
 How sweetly would she glide between  
 your wraths,  
 And steal you from each other! for  
 she walk'd  
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord  
 of love  
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Gali-  
 lee!  
 And one—of him I was not bid to  
 speak—<sup>710</sup>  
 Was always with her, whom you also  
 knew.  
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy  
 love.  
 And these had been together from the  
 first;  
 They might have been together till  
 the last.  
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
 sorely tried,  
 May wreck itself without the pilot's  
 guilt,  
 Without the captain's knowledge;  
 hope with me.  
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
 with shame?  
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of  
 these  
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd  
 walls,<sup>720</sup>  
 "My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers  
 wept; but some,  
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns  
 than those  
 That knit themselves for summer  
 shadow, scowl'd  
 At their great lord. He, when it seem'd  
 he saw

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar,  
 but fork'd  
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his  
 head,  
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, sol-  
 dier-like,  
 Erect; but when the preacher's ca-  
 dence flow'd  
 Softening thro' all the gentle attri-  
 butes<sup>730</sup>  
 Of his lost child, the wife, who  
 watch'd his face,  
 Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
 mouth;  
 And 'O, pray God that he hold up!'  
 she thought,  
 'Or surely I shall shame myself and  
 him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who be-  
 side your hearths  
 Can take her place—if echoing me  
 you cry  
 "Our house is left unto us desolate"?  
 But thou, O thou that killest, hadst  
 thou known,  
 O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
 stood  
 The things belonging to thy peace and  
 ours!<sup>740</sup>  
 Is there no prophet but the voice that  
 calls  
 Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-  
 pent"?  
 Is not our own child on the narrow  
 way,  
 Who down to those that saunter in the  
 broad  
 Cries, "Come up hither," as a prophet  
 to us?  
 Is there no stoning save with flint and  
 rock?  
 Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—  
 No desolation but by sword and fire?  
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and  
 myself  
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my  
 loss.<sup>750</sup>  
 Give me your prayers, for he is past  
 your prayers,  
 Not past the living fount of pity in  
 heaven.

But I that thought myself long-suffer-  
 ing, meek,  
 Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the  
 words  
 Have twisted back upon themselves,  
 and mean  
 Vileness, we are grown so proud—I  
 wish'd my voice  
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
 To blow these sacrifices thro' the  
 world—  
 Sent like the twelve-divided concu-  
 bine  
 To inflame the tribes; but there—out  
 yonder—earth <sup>760</sup>  
 Lightens from her own central hell—  
 O, there  
 The red fruit of an old idolatry—  
 The heads of chiefs and princes fall  
 so fast,  
 They cling together in the ghastly  
 sack—  
 The land all shambles—naked mar-  
 riages  
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-mur-  
 der'd France,  
 By shores that darken with the gather-  
 ing wolf,  
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick  
 sea.  
 Is this a time to madden madness  
 then?  
 Was this a time for these to flaunt  
 their pride? <sup>770</sup>  
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as  
 dense as those  
 Which hid the Holiest from the peo-  
 ple's eyes  
 Ere the great death, shroud this great  
 sin from all!  
 Doubtless our narrow world must  
 canvass it.  
 O, rather pray for those and pity  
 them,  
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-  
 plish'd, bring  
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to  
 the grave—  
 Who broke the bond which they de-  
 sired to break,  
 Which else had link'd their race with  
 times to come—

Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
 purity, <sup>780</sup>  
 Grossly contriving their dear daugh-  
 ter's good—  
 Poor souls, and knew not what they  
 did, but sat  
 Ignorant, devising their own daugh-  
 ter's death!  
 May not that earthly chastisement  
 suffice?  
 Have not our love and reverence left  
 them bare?  
 Will not another take their heritage?  
 Will there be children's laughter in  
 their hall  
 For ever and for ever, or one stone  
 Left on another, or is it a light thing  
 That I, their guest, their host, their  
 ancient friend, <sup>790</sup>  
 I made by these the last of all my  
 race,  
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
 cried  
 Christ ere His agony to those that  
 swore  
 Not by the temple but the gold, and  
 made  
 Their own traditions God, and slew  
 the Lord,  
 And left their memories a world's  
 curse—"Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you deso-  
 late"?"  
 Ended he had not, but she brook'd  
 no more;  
 Long since her heart had beat re-  
 morselessly,  
 Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her, and  
 a sense <sup>800</sup>  
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
 Then their eyes vexed her; for on en-  
 tering  
 He had cast the curtains of their seat  
 aside—  
 Black velvet of the costliest—she her-  
 self  
 Had seen to that. Fain had she closed  
 them now,  
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
 Her husband inch by inch, but when  
 she laid,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he  
 veil'd  
 His face with the other, and at once,  
 as falls  
 A creeper when the prop is broken,  
 fell 810  
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
 swoon'd.  
 Then her own people bore along the  
 nave  
 Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-  
 gre face  
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
 years.  
 And her the lord of all the landscape  
 round  
 Even to its last horizon, and of all  
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, fol-  
 low'd out  
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
 ways  
 Stumbling across the market to his  
 death, 820  
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and  
 seem'd  
 Always about to fall, grasping the  
 pews  
 And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
 door;  
 Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
 stood,  
 Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
 again.

But nevermore did either pass the  
 gate  
 Save under pall with bearers. In one  
 month,  
 Thro' weary and yet ever wearier  
 hours,  
 The childless mother went to seek her  
 child;  
 And when he felt the silence of his  
 house 830  
 About him, and the change and not  
 the change,  
 And those fixt eyes of painted ances-  
 tors  
 Staring for ever from their gilded  
 walls  
 On him their last descendant, his own  
 head

Began to droop, to fall. The man be-  
 came  
 Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate.'  
 Dead for two years before his death  
 was he;  
 But when the second Christmas came,  
 escaped  
 His keepers, and the silence which he  
 felt 839  
 To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
 By wife and child; nor wanted at his  
 end  
 The dark retinue reverencing death  
 At golden thresholds; nor from ten-  
 der hearts,  
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-  
 ished race,  
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
 Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
 down,  
 And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
 farms;  
 And where the two contrived their  
 daughter's good,  
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has  
 made his run,  
 The hedgehog underneath the plan-  
 tain bores, 850  
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless  
 face,  
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
 weasel there  
 Follows the mouse, and all is open  
 field.

## SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and  
 bred;  
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
 child—  
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
 years old.  
 They, thinking that her clear german-  
 der eye  
 Droopt in the giant-factoried city-  
 gloom,  
 Came, with a month's leave given  
 them, to the sea;  
 For which his gains were dock'd, how-  
 ever small.

Small were his gains, and hard his  
 work; besides,  
 Their slender household fortunes—for  
 the man  
 Had risk'd his little—like the little  
 thrift,<sup>10</sup>  
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a  
 deep.  
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
 Would darken, as he cursed his credu-  
 lousness,  
 And that one unctuous mouth which  
 lured him, rogue,  
 To buy strange shares in some Peru-  
 vian mine.  
 Now seaward-bound for health they  
 gain'd a coast,  
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning  
 cave,  
 At close of day; slept, woke, and went  
 the next,  
 The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
 church,<sup>19</sup>  
 To chapel; where a heated pulpiteer,  
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
 men,  
 Announced the coming doom, and ful-  
 minated  
 Against the Scarlet Woman and her  
 creed.  
 For sideways up he swung his arms,  
 and shriek'd  
 'Thus, thus with violence,' even as if  
 he held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-  
 self  
 Were that great angel; 'Thus with vio-  
 lence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;  
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-  
 hearted wife<sup>29</sup>  
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world,  
 He at his own; but when the wordy  
 storm  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced  
 the shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing  
 caves,  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but  
 scarce believed—  
 The soot-flake of so many a summer  
 still

Clung to their fancies—that they saw,  
 the sea.  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now  
 on cliff,  
 Linging about the thymy promon-  
 tories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the  
 west,  
 And rosed in the east, then homeward<sup>40</sup>  
 and to bed;  
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris-  
 tian hope,  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
 Returning, as the bird returns, at  
 night,  
 'Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,'  
 Said, 'Love, forgive him.' But he did  
 not speak;  
 And silenced by that silence lay the  
 wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died  
 for all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their  
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a  
 full tide<sup>50</sup>  
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
 foremost rocks  
 Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild  
 sea-smoke,  
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
 and fell  
 In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon  
 Dead claps of thunder from within the  
 cliffs  
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this the  
 babe,  
 Their Margaret cradled near them,  
 wail'd and woke  
 The mother, and the father suddenly  
 cried,  
 'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd and  
 groaning said:

'Forgive! How many will say, "for-  
 give," and find<sup>60</sup>  
 A sort of absolution in the sound  
 To hate a little longer! No; the sin  
 That neither God nor man can well  
 forgive,

Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
 Is it so true that second thoughts are  
     best?  
 Not first, and third, which are a ripper  
     first?  
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late  
     for use.  
 Ah, love, there surely lives in man and  
     beast  
 Something divine to warn them of  
     their foes;  
 And such a sense, when first I fronted  
     him,  
 Said, "Trust him not;" but after, when  
     I came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
     less,  
 Fought with what seem'd my own  
     uncharity,  
 Sat at his table, drank his costly wines,  
 Made more and more allowance for  
     his talk;  
 Went further, fool! and trusted him  
     with all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen  
     years  
 Of dust and desk-work. There is no  
     such mine,  
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing  
     gold,  
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea  
     roars  
 Ruin—a fearful night!

    'Not fearful; fair,'  
 Said the good wife, 'if every star in  
     heaven  
 Can make it fair; you do but hear the  
     tide.  
 Had you ill dreams?'

    'O, yes,' he said, 'I dream'd  
 Of such a tide swelling toward the  
     land,  
 And I from out the boundless outer  
     deep  
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
 Of those dark caves that run beneath  
     the cliffs.  
 I thought the motion of the boundless  
     deep

Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
     upon it  
 In darkness; then I saw one lovely star  
 Larger and larger. "What a world," I  
     thought,  
 "To live in!" but in moving on I found  
 Only the landward exit of the cave,  
 Bright with the sun upon the stream  
     beyond;  
 And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand. Then out I slipt  
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
 As high as heaven, and every bird that  
     sings;  
 And here the night-light flickering in  
     my eyes  
 Awoke me.'

    'That was then your dream,' she  
     said,  
 'Not sad, but sweet.'

    'So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
 'And mused upon it, drifting up the  
     stream  
 In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
 The broken vision; for I dream'd that  
     still  
 The motion of the great deep bore me  
     on,  
 And that the woman walk'd upon the  
     brink.  
 I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd  
     her of it.  
 "It came," she said, "by working in  
     the mines."  
 O, then to ask her of my shares, I  
     thought;  
 And ask'd; but not a word; she shook  
     her head.  
 And then the motion of the current  
     ceased,  
 And there was rolling thunder; and we  
     reach'd  
 A mountain, like a wall of burs and  
     thorns;  
 But she with her strong feet up the  
     steep hill  
 Trod out a path. I follow'd, and at top  
 She pointed seaward; there a fleet of  
     glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under  
me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud <sup>120</sup>  
That not one moment ceased to thun-  
der, past  
In sunshine. Right across its track  
there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of  
gold,  
Or what seem'd gold; and I was glad  
at first  
To think that in our often-ransack'd  
world  
Still so much gold was left; and then I  
fear'd  
Lest the gay navy there should splinter  
on it,  
And fearing waved my arm to warn  
them off;  
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet—  
I thought I could have died to save it  
—near'd, <sup>130</sup>  
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and van-  
ish'd, and I awoke,  
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life, the woman honest  
Work,  
And my poor venture but a fleet of  
glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to com-  
fort him,  
'You raised your arm, you tumbled  
down and broke  
The glass with little Margaret's medi-  
cine in it;  
And, breaking that, you made and <sup>139</sup>  
broke your dream.  
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband;  
'yesterday  
I met him suddenly in the street, and  
ask'd  
That which I ask'd the woman in my  
dream.  
Like her, he shook his head. "Show me  
the books!"  
He dodged me with a long and loose  
account.  
'The books, the books!" but he, he  
could not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and  
death;  
When the great Books—see Danie.  
seven and ten—  
Were open'd, I should find he meant  
me well;  
And then began to bloat himself, and  
ooze <sup>150</sup>  
All over with the fat affectionate smile  
That makes the widow lean. "My dear-  
est friend,  
Have faith, have faith! We live by  
faith," said he;  
"And all things work together for the  
good  
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote  
him—last  
Gript my hand hard, and with God-  
bless-you went.  
I stood like one that had received a  
blow.  
I found a hard friend in his loose ac-  
counts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his  
hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you; then my  
eyes <sup>160</sup>  
Pursued him down the street, and fai-  
away,  
Among the honest shoulders of the  
crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding  
knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said  
the good wife;  
'So are we all; but do not call him,  
love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and  
proved, forgive.  
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his  
friend  
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
about <sup>169</sup>  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and him-  
self  
The prisoner at the bar, ever con-  
demn'd.  
And that drags down his life; then  
comes what comes

Hereafter; and he meant, he said he meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,  
you well.'

'"With all his conscience and one  
eye askew"—  
Love, let me quote these lines, that  
you may learn  
A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of  
yours—

'"With all his conscience and one  
eye askew, 180  
So false, he partly took himself for  
true;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart  
was dry,  
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round  
his eye;  
Who, never naming God except for  
gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain,  
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross  
his tool,  
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe  
and fool;  
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
forged,  
And snake-like slimed his victim ere  
he gorged;  
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the  
rest 190  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which him-  
self had thriven."  
How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,  
'I loathe it; he had never kindly heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in  
it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had  
one  
That altogether went to music? Still  
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd 200  
Of that same coast.—

But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,  
lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd  
a ridge  
Of breaker issued from the belt, and  
still  
Grew with the growing note, and when  
the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
those cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light—the  
same as that  
Living within the belt—whereby she  
saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs  
no more, 210  
But huge cathedral fronts of every  
age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye  
could see,  
One after one; and then the great  
ridge drew,  
Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
And past into the belt and swell'd  
again  
Slowly to music. Ever when it broke  
The statues, king, or saint, or founder  
fell;  
Then from the gaps and chasms of  
ruin left  
Came men and women in dark clusters  
round,  
Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall  
not fall!' 220  
And others, 'Let them lie, for they  
have fallen.'  
And still they strove and wrangled;  
and she grieved  
In her strange dream, she knew not  
why, to find  
Their wildest wallings never out of  
tune  
With that sweet note; and ever as  
their shrieks  
Ran highest up the gamut, that great  
wave  
Returning, while none mark'd it, on  
the crowd  
Broke, mixt with awful light, and  
show'd their eyes



Glaring, and passionate looks, and  
 swept away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men  
 of stone, <sup>230</sup>  
 To the waste deeps together.

‘Then I fixt  
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown’d with stars and high  
 among the stars,—  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her  
 child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-  
 fronts—  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a  
 cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret’s,  
 and I woke,  
 And my dream awed me;—well—but  
 what are dreams?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of  
 a glass, <sup>240</sup>  
 And mine but from the crying of a  
 child.’

‘Child? No!’ said he, ‘but this tide’s  
 roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of  
 doom  
 And loud-lung’d Antibabylonian-  
 isms—  
 Altho’ I grant but little music there—  
 Went both to make your dream; but  
 if there were  
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
 Sphere-music such as that you  
 dream’d about,  
 Why, that would make our passions  
 far too like  
 The discords dear to the musician.  
 No— <sup>250</sup>  
 One shriek of hate would jar all the  
 hymns of heaven.  
 True devils with no ear, they howl in  
 tune  
 With nothing but the devil!’

“‘True” indeed!  
 One of our town, but later by an hour  
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me  
 on the shore;

While you were running down the  
 sands, and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-fur-  
 below flap,  
 Good man, to please the child. She  
 brought strange news.  
 Why were you silent when I spoke to-  
 night?  
 I had set my heart on your forgiving  
 him <sup>260</sup>  
 Before you knew. We *must* forgive the  
 dead.’

‘Dead! who is dead?’

‘The man your eye pursued.  
 A little after you had parted with him,  
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart-dis-  
 ease.’

‘Dead? he? of heart-disease? what  
 heart had he  
 To die of? dead!’

‘Ah, dearest, if there be  
 A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
 And if he did that wrong you charge  
 him with,  
 His angel broke his heart. But your  
 rough voice—  
 You spoke so loud—has roused the  
 child again. <sup>270</sup>  
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not  
 sleep  
 Without her “little birdie”? well, then,  
 sleep,  
 And I will sing you “birdie.”’

Saying this,  
 The woman half turn’d round from  
 him she loved,  
 Left him one hand, and reaching thro’  
 the night  
 Her other, found—for it was close be-  
 side—  
 And half-embraced the basket cradle-  
 head  
 With one soft arm, which, like the  
 pliant bough  
 That moving moves the nest and nes-  
 tling, sway’d  
 The cradle, while she sang this baby-  
 song: <sup>280</sup>

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger,  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day? 290  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger;  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps; let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.  
He also sleeps—another sleep than  
ours.  
He can do no more wrong; forgive  
him, dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man, 300

'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to  
come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night be  
sound;  
I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,  
'Your own will be the sweeter,' and  
they slept.

### ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and  
sweet,  
In this wide hall with earth's inven-  
tion stored,  
And praise the invisible universal  
Lord,  
Who lets once more in peace the na-  
tions meet,  
Where Science, Art, and Labor have  
outpoured

Their myriad horns of plenty at our  
feet.

#### II

O silent father of our Kings to be,  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks  
to thee!

#### III

The world-compelling plan was  
thine,—  
And, lo! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design;  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom and wheel and enginery,  
Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,  
Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,  
And shapes and hues of Art divine!  
All of beauty, all of use,  
That one fair planet can produce,  
Brought from under every star,  
Blown from over every main,  
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
The works of peace with works of  
war.

#### IV

Is the goal so far away?  
Far, how far no tongue can say,  
Let us dream our dream to-day. .

O ye, the wise who think, the wise  
who reign,  
From growing Commerce loose her  
latest chain,  
And let the fair white-wing'd peace-  
maker fly  
To happy heavens under all the sky,  
And mix the seasons and the golden  
hours;  
Till each man find his own in all men's  
good,

And all men work in noble brother-  
hood,  
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
towers,  
And ruling by obeying Nature's pow-  
ers,  
And gathering all the fruits of earth  
and crown'd with all her flow-  
ers.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the  
sea,

Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of  
thee,

Alexandra!

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of  
fleet!

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and  
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet!

Break, happy land, into earlier flow-  
ers!

Make music, O bird, in the new-  
budded bowers!

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and  
towers!

Flames, on the windy headland flare!  
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!  
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March  
air!

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!  
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire!

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the  
strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the  
land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's  
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as  
fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the  
sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the  
throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your  
own;

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome  
of thee,

Alexandra!

## THE GRANDMOTHER

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone,  
you say, little Anne?

Ruddy and white, and strong on his  
legs, he looks like a man.

And Willy's wife has written; she  
never was over-wise,

Never the wife for Willy; he wouldn't  
take my advice.

For, Annie, you see, her father was  
not the man to save,

Had n't a head to manage, and drank  
himself into his grave.

Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was  
against it for one.

Eh!—but he would n't hear me—and  
Willy, you say, is gone.

## III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the  
flower of the flock;

Never a man could fling him, for Willy  
stood like a rock. <sup>10</sup>

'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!'  
says Doctor; and he would be  
bound

There was not his like that year in  
twenty parishes round.

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

But a lie which is part a truth is a  
harder matter to fight.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his  
legs, but still of his tongue!  
I ought to have gone before him; I  
wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie; I have  
not long to stay.  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for  
he lived far away.

IX

And Willy had not been down to the  
farm for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho'  
it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what  
Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never  
make oneself clean.

Why do you look at me, Annie?  
you think I am hard and cold;  
But all my children have gone before  
me, I am so old.  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I  
weep for the rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best. 20

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with  
your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost  
me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie; it  
cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, sev-  
enty years ago.

VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to  
the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time; I  
knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering  
me, the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire, as you know,  
my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII

And the parson made it his text that  
week, and he said likewise  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever  
the blackest of lies, 30  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met  
and fought with outright,

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,  
and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and  
stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising  
over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush be-  
side me chirrup the nightin-  
gale. 40

XI

All of a sudden he stopt; there past  
by the gate of the farm  
Willy,—he did n't see me,—and Jenny  
hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke  
I scarce knew how;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—  
it makes me angry now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd  
the thing that he meant;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking  
curtsey and went.  
And I said, 'Let us part; in a hundred  
years it'll all be the same.  
You cannot love me at all, if you love  
not my good name.'

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all  
wet, in the sweet moonshine:

'Sweetheart, I love you so well that  
 your good name is mine. <sup>50</sup>  
 And what do I care for Jane, let her  
 speak of you well or ill;  
 But marry me out of hand; we two  
 shall be happy still.'

## XIV

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I  
 needs must speak my mind,  
 And I fear you'll listen to tales, be  
 jealous and hard and unkind.'  
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his  
 arms, and answer'd, 'No, love,  
 no;'  
 Seventy years ago, my darling, sev-  
 enty years ago.

## XV

So Willy and I were wedded. I wore a  
 lilac gown;  
 And the ringers rang with a will, and  
 he gave the ringers a crown.  
 But the first that ever I bare was dead  
 before he was born;  
 Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,  
 flower and thorn. <sup>60</sup>

## XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever  
 I thought of death.  
 There lay the sweet little body that  
 never had drawn a breath.  
 I had not wept, little Anne, not since  
 I had been a wife;  
 But I wept like a child that day, for  
 the babe had fought for his life.

## XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if  
 with anger or pain;  
 I look'd at the still little body—his  
 trouble had all been in vain.  
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see  
 him another morn;  
 But I wept like a child for the child  
 that was dead before he was  
 born.

## XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for  
 he seldom said me nay.  
 Kind, like a man, was he; like a man,  
 too, would have his way; <sup>70</sup>  
 Never jealous—not he. We had many  
 a happy year;  
 And he died, and I could not weep—  
 my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will  
 that I, too, then could have  
 died;  
 I began to be tired a little, and fain  
 had slept at his side.  
 And that was ten years back, or more,  
 if I don't forget;  
 But as to the children, Annie, they're  
 all about me yet.

## XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie  
 who left me at two,  
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie,  
 an Annie like you;  
 Pattering over the boards, she comes  
 and goes at her will,  
 While Harry is in the five-acre and  
 Charlie ploughing the hill. <sup>80</sup>

## XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them  
 too—they sing to their team;  
 Often they come to the door in a  
 pleasant kind of a dream.  
 They come and sit by my chair, they  
 hover about my bed—  
 I am not always certain if they be  
 alive or dead.

## XXII

And yet I know for a truth there's  
 none of them left alive,  
 For Harry went at sixty, your father  
 at sixty-five;  
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh  
 three-score and ten.

I knew them all as babies, and now  
they're elderly men.

## XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not  
often I grieve;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my  
father's farm at eve;<sup>90</sup>  
And the neighbors come and laugh  
and gossip, and so do I;  
I find myself often laughing at things  
that have long gone by.

## XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins  
should make us sad;  
But mine is a time of peace, and there  
is Grace to be had;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us  
all when life shall cease;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the  
message is one of peace.

## XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be  
free from pain,  
And happy has been my life; but I  
would not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all,  
and long for rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have  
wept with the best.<sup>100</sup>

## XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my  
eldest-born, my flower;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has  
but gone for an hour,—  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this  
room into the next;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time  
have I to be vexed?

## XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she  
never was over-wise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie; thank God  
that I keep my eyes.

There is but a trifle left you, when I  
shall have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now;  
you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## OLD STYLE

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä  
liggin' 'ere aloän?  
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse;  
whooy, Doctor 's abeän an'  
agoän;  
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle.  
but I beänt a fool;  
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin'  
to break my rule.

Doctors, they knows nowt, fur a says  
what 's nawways true;  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the  
things that a do.  
I 've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight  
sin' I beän 'ere.  
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-  
noight for foorty year.

## III

Parson 's a beän loikewise, an' a sit-  
tin' 'ere o' my bed.  
'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you<sup>1</sup> to  
'issén, my friend,' a said,

An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe  
were due, an' I gied it in hond;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done  
boy the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa  
mooch to larn.  
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy  
Marris's barne.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in *hour*.

Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi'  
Squire an' choorch an' staäte,  
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver  
agin the raäte.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor  
moy Sally wur deäd,  
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a  
buzzard-clock<sup>1</sup> ower my 'eäd,  
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but  
I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,  
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a  
said, an' I coom'd awaäy.

## VI

Bessy Marris's barnel tha knaws she  
laäid it to meä.  
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a  
bad un, sheä.  
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass,  
tha mun understand;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done  
boy the lond.

## VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a  
say it eäsy an' freeä:  
'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to  
'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.  
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw sum-  
mun said it in 'aäste;  
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an'  
I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

## VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw,  
naw, tha was not born then;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd  
'um mysén;  
Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>2</sup> fur I  
'eärd 'um about an' about,  
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an'  
raäved an' rembled 'um out.

## IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um  
theer a-laäid of 'is faäce

<sup>1</sup> Cockchafer.<sup>2</sup> Bittern.

Down i' the woild 'enemies: afoor I  
coom'd to the plaäce.  
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner<sup>2</sup> 'ed  
shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.  
Noäks wur' 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize  
—but git ma my aäle.

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer  
warn't not feeäd for a cow;  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'  
looök at it now—  
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now  
theer 's lots o' feeäd,  
Fourscoor<sup>3</sup> yows upon it, an' some on  
it down i' seeäd.<sup>4</sup>

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I meän'd  
to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd  
plow thruff it an' all,  
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut  
let ma aloän,—  
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o'  
Squire's, an' lond o' my oän.

## XII

Do Godamoighty know what a 's doing  
a-taäkin' o' meä?  
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an'  
yonder a peä;  
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a'  
dear, a' dear!  
And I 'a managed for Squire coom  
Michaelmas thutty year.

## XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant  
not a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a  
niver mended a fence;  
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä  
an' taäke ma now,  
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurn-  
aby hoälms to plow!

<sup>1</sup> Anemones.<sup>2</sup> One or other.<sup>3</sup> ou as in hour.<sup>4</sup> Clover.

## XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they  
 seeäs ma a passin' boy,  
 Says to thessén, naw doubt, 'What a  
 man a beä sewer-loy!'  
 Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire  
 sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All;  
 I done moy duty by Squire an' I done  
 moy duty boy hall.

## XV

Squire 's i' Lunnon, an' summun I  
 reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
 For whoä 's to howd the lond ater meä  
 thot muddles ma quoit;  
 Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver  
 give it to Joänes,  
 Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver  
 rembles the stoäns.

## XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä may-  
 hap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds  
 wi' the devil's oän teäm.  
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife  
 they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I  
 couldn abeär to see it.

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn  
 bring ma the ääle?  
 Doctor 's a 'toättler, lass, an a 's hallus  
 i' the owd taäle;  
 I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a  
 knaws naw moor nor a floy;  
 Git ma my ääle, I tell tha, an' if I mun  
 doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## NEW STYLE

## I

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as  
 they canters awaäy?  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's  
 what I 'ears 'em saäy.

Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam,  
 thou's an ass for thy pains;  
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs,  
 nor in all thy brains.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,  
 Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse—  
 Dosn't thou know that a man mun be  
 eäther a man or a mouse?  
 Time to think on it then; for thou'll  
 be twenty to weeäk.<sup>1</sup>  
 Proputty, proputty—woä then, woä—  
 let ma 'ear mysén speak.

## III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän  
 a-talkin' o' thee;  
 Thou 's beän talkin' to muther, an' she  
 beän a-tellin' it me.  
 Thou 'll not marry for munny—thou's  
 sweet upo' parson's lass—  
 Noä—thou 'll marry for luvv—an' we  
 boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

## IV

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by—Saäint's-  
 daäy—they was ringin the  
 bells.  
 She's a beauty, thou thinks—an' soä  
 is scoors o' gells,  
 Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a  
 beauty?—the flower as blaws.  
 But proputty, proputty sticks, an'  
 proputty, proputty graws.

Do'ant be stunt; <sup>2</sup> taäke time. I knaws  
 what maäkes tha sa mad.  
 Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén  
 when I wur a lad?  
 But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often  
 'as tow'd ma this:  
 'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä  
 wheer munny is!'

week.

<sup>2</sup> Obstinate.



## VI

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy  
muther coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nice-  
tish bit o' land.  
Maäybe she warn't a beauty—I niver  
giv it a thowt—  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an'  
kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

## VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt  
'a nowt when 'e 's deäd,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,  
and addle <sup>1</sup> her breäd.  
Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an'  
weänt niver get hissén clear,  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor  
'e coom'd to the shere.

## VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi'  
lots o' Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant  
got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi'  
noän to lend 'im a shove,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd <sup>2</sup> yowe; fur,  
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy  
lass an' 'er munny too,  
Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they 've  
good right to do.  
Couldn't I luvv thy muther by cause o'  
'er munny laaïd by?  
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight  
moor fur it; reäson why.

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to  
marry the lass,  
Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we  
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

<sup>1</sup> Earn.<sup>2</sup> Or, fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.

Woä then, proputtly, wiltha?—an ass  
as near as mays nowt <sup>1</sup>—

Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees  
is as fell as owt.<sup>2</sup>

## XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäð,  
lad, out o' the fence!  
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman  
burn? is it shillins an' pence?  
Proputtly, proputtly's ivrything 'ere,  
an', Sammy, I 'm blest  
If it is n't the saäme oop yonder, fur  
them as 'as it 's the best.

## XII

Tis 'n them as 'as munny as breäks  
into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an'  
taäkes their regular meäls.  
Noä, but it 's them as niver knaws  
wheer a meäl 's to be 'ad.  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the  
poor in a loomp is bad.

## XIII

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun  
'a beän a laäzy lot,  
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'  
whiniver munny was got.  
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways  
'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd issén deäð, an'  
'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby  
beck cooms out by the 'ill!  
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I  
runs oop to the mill;  
An' I 'll run oop to the brig, an' that  
thou 'll live to see;  
And if thou marries a good un I'll  
leäve the land to thee.

<sup>1</sup> Makes nothing.<sup>2</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

## xv

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby  
 I meäns to stick;  
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve  
 the land to Dick.—  
 Coom oop, proputtty, proputtty—that's  
 what I 'ears 'im saäy—  
 Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty—canter  
 an' canter awaäy.

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that  
 flashest white,  
 Deepening thy voice with the deep-  
 ening of the night,  
 All along the valley, where thy waters  
 flow,  
 I walk'd with one I loved two and  
 thirty years ago.  
 All along the valley, while I walk'd  
 to-day,  
 The two and thirty years were a mist  
 that rolls away;  
 For all along the valley, down thy  
 rocky bed,  
 Thy living voice to me was as the  
 voice of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
 cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living  
 voice to me.

## THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour  
 I cast to earth a seed.  
 Up there came a flower,  
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
 Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
 It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall  
 Stole the seed by night;

Sow'd it far and wide  
 By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried,  
 'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:  
 He that runs may read.  
 Most can raise the flowers now  
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
 And some are poor indeed;  
 And now again the people  
 Call it but a weed.

## REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
 Where yon broad water sweetly,  
 slowly glides.  
 It sees itself from thatch to base  
 Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to  
 die!  
 Her quiet dream of life this hour  
 may cease.  
 Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
 To some more perfect peace.

## THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
 Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,  
 And reach'd the ship and caught the  
 rope,  
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
 He heard a fierce mermaid cry,  
 'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix  
 In caves about the dreary bay,  
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall  
 play.'



'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that  
roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for  
shame;"  
My father raves of death and wreck,—  
They are all to blame, they are all  
to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.'

## THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we  
go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or  
so?'

The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she  
was wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we  
go?'

And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor  
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd?  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
sun

The facets of the glorious mountain  
flash

Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,  
And his compass is but of a single  
note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not! mock me not! love,  
let us go.'

'No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on  
the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely  
wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the  
blood,  
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

## A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true,—no truer Time  
himself

Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-  
more

Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
Shoots to the fall,—take this and pray  
that he

Who wrote it, honoring your sweet  
faith in him,

May trust himself; and after praise  
and scorn,

As one who feels the immeasurable  
world,

Attain the wise indifference of the  
wise;

And after autumn past—if left to pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless  
days—

Draw toward the long frost and  
longest night,

Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
fruit

Which in our winter woodland looks a  
flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

## EXPERIMENTS

*BOÄDICÉA*

WHILE about the shore of Mona those  
 Neronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar  
 of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing  
 loftily charioted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard her  
 in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near  
 the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her  
 daughters o'er a wild confed-  
 eracy.

‘They that scorn the tribes and call  
 us Britain’s barbarous popu-  
 laces,  
 Did they hear me, would they listen,  
 did they pity me supplicating?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish?  
 shall I brook to be supplicated?  
 Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear,  
 Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 Must their ever-ravening eagle’s beak  
 and talon annihilate us?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave  
 it gorily quivering?  
 Bark an answer, Britain’s raven! bark  
 and blacken innumerable,  
 Blacken round the Roman carrion,  
 make the carcase a skeleton,  
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,  
 from the wilderness, wallow in  
 it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten’d, Ta-  
 ranis be propitiated.  
 Lo their colony half-defended! lo their  
 colony, Cámulodúne!  
 There the horde of Roman robbers  
 mock at a barbarous adversary.  
 There the hive of Roman liars wor-  
 ship an emperor-idiot.  
 Such is Rome, and this her deity; hear  
 it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

‘Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard  
 it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!

Doubt not ye the Gods have answer’d,  
 Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.  
 These have told us all their anger in  
 miraculous utterances,  
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a  
 murmur heard aërially,  
 Phantom sound of blows descending,  
 moan of an enemy massacred,  
 Phantom wail of women and children,  
 multitudinous agonies.  
 Bloodily flow’d the Tamesa rolling  
 phantom bodies of horses  
 and men;  
 Then a phantom colony smoulder’d  
 on the reflux estuary;  
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly  
 giddily tottering—  
 There was one who watch’d and told  
 me—down their statue of Vic-  
 tory fell.  
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo  
 the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson?  
 shall we care to be pitiful?  
 Shall we deal with it as an infant?  
 shall we dandle it amorously?

‘Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian,  
 hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 While I roved about the forest, long  
 and bitterly meditating,  
 There I heard them in the darkness,  
 at the mystical ceremony;  
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang  
 the terrible prophetesses:  
 “Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,  
 isle of silvery parapets!  
 Tho’ the Roman eagle shadow thee,  
 tho’ the gathering enemy nar-  
 row thee,  
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,  
 thou shalt be the mighty one  
 yet!  
 Thine the liberty, thine the glory,  
 thine the deeds to be cele-  
 brated,  
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light  
 and shadow illimitable,  
 Thine the lands of lasting summer,  
 many-blossoming Paradises,  
 Thine the North and thine the South  
 and thine the battle-thunder of  
 God.”

## BOÄDICÉA

So they chanted: how shall Britain  
light upon auguries happier?  
So they chanted in the darkness, and  
there cometh a victory now.

'Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian,  
hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!  
Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me  
the lover of liberty,  
Me they seized and me they tortured,  
me they lash'd and humiliated,  
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine  
of ruffian violators!  
See, they sit, they hide their faces,  
miserable in ignominy!  
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not  
by blood to be satiated.  
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the  
colony Cámulodúne!  
There they ruled, and thence they  
wasted all the flourishing territory,  
Thither at their will they haled the  
yellow-ringleted Britoness—  
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe,  
unexhausted, inexorable.  
Shout, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout,  
Coritanian, Trinobant,  
Till the victim hear within and yearn  
to hurry precipitously,  
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind,  
like the smoke in a hurricane  
whirl'd.  
Lo the colony, there they rioted in  
the city of Cúnobelíne!  
There they drank in cups of emerald,  
there at tables of ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in  
their tender effeminacy.  
There they dwelt and there they  
rioted; there — there — they  
dwell no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,  
break the works of the statu-  
ary,  
Take the hoary Roman head and shat-  
ter it, hold it abominable,

Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his  
lust and voluptuousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me  
they lash'd and humiliated,  
Chop the breasts from off the mother,  
dash the brains of the little one  
out,  
Up, my Britons! on, my chariot! on,  
my chargers, trample them un-  
der us!

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing  
loftily charioted,  
Brandishing in her hand a dart and  
rolling glances lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her  
daughters in her fierce volu-  
bility.  
Till her people all around the royal  
chariot agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together,  
writhing barbarous lineaments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands,  
when they shiver in January,  
Roar'd as when the roaring breakers  
boom and blanch on the preci-  
pices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter  
tear an oak on a promontory.  
So the silent colony, hearing her tu-  
multuous adversaries  
Clash the darts and on the buckler  
beat with rapid unanimous  
hand,  
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all  
her pitiless avarice,  
Till she felt the heart within her fall  
and flutter tremulously,  
Then her pulses at the clamoring of  
her enemy fainted away.  
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of  
tyranny tyranny buds.  
Ran the land with Roman slaughter,  
multitudinous agonies.  
Perish'd many a maid and matron,  
many a valorous legionary,  
Fell the colony, city, and citadel,  
London, Verulam, Cámulo-  
dúne.

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

## IN QUANTITY

(HENDECASYLLABICS)

### ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

(HEXAMETERS AND PENTAMETERS)

THESE lame hexameters the strong-  
wing'd music of Homer!

No—but a most burlesque barbarous  
experiment.

When was a harsher sound ever heard,  
ye Muses, in England?

When did a frog coarser croak upon  
our Helicon?

Hexameters no worse than daring  
Germany gave us,

Barbarous experiment, barbarous  
hexameters.

### MILTON

(ALCAICS)

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of har-  
monies,

O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,

Milton, a name to resound for  
ages;

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous ar-  
mories,

Tower, as the deep-domed empy-  
rean

Rings to the roar of an angel on-  
set!

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmur-  
ing,

And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
Charm, as a wanderer out in  
ocean,

Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean

isle,

And crimson-hued the stately palm-  
woods

Whisper in odorous heights of  
even.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly  
bears him,

Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent review-  
ers.

Should I flounder a while without a  
tumble

Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without  
a welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to  
tumble,

So fantastical is the dainty metre.

Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor  
believe me

Too presumptuous, indolent review-  
ers.

O blatant Magazines, regard me  
rather—

Since I blush to belaud myself a mo-  
ment—

As some rare little rose, a piece of in-  
most

Horticultural art, or half coquette-  
like

Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

### SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

[ILIAD, VIII. 542-561]

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd  
applause;

Then loosed their sweating horses  
from the yoke,

And each beside his chariot bound his  
own;

And oxen from the city, and goodly  
sheep

In haste they drove, and honey-  
hearted wine

And bread from out the houses  
 brought and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from  
 off the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapor far into the  
 heaven.  
 And these all night upon the bridge <sup>1</sup>  
 of war  
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them  
 blazed.  
 As when in heaven the stars about the  
 moon  
 Look beautiful, when all the winds  
 are laid,  
 And every height comes out, and jut-  
 ting peak  
 And valley, and the immeasurable  
 heavens  
 Break open to their highest, and all  
 the stars  
 Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in  
 his heart;  
 So many a fire between the ships and  
 stream  
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers  
 of Troy,  
 A thousand on the plain; and close  
 by each  
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the  
 steeds,  
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden  
 dawn.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,  
 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak: you  
 told us all  
 That England's honest censure  
 went too far,  
 That our free press should cease to  
 brawl,  
 Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
 war.  
 It was our ancient privilege, my  
 Lords,  
 To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,  
 into words.

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.

We love not this French God, the  
 child of hell,  
 Wild War, who breaks the converse  
 of the wise;  
 But though we love kind Peace so  
 well,  
 We dare not even by silence sanc-  
 tion lies.  
 It might be safe our censures to with-  
 draw,  
 And yet, my Lords, not well; there is  
 a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak  
 free,  
 Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
 break.  
 No little German state are we,  
 But the one voice in Europe; we  
*must* speak,  
 That if to-night our greatness were  
 struck dead,  
 There might be left some record of  
 the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be  
 bold.  
 Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant  
 o'er.  
 Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
 On her and us and ours for ever-  
 more.  
 What! have we fought for freedom  
 from our prime,  
 At last to dodge and palter with a  
 public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never  
 fear'd.  
 From our first Charles by force we  
 wrung our claims.  
 Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
 We flung the burthen of the second  
 James.  
 I say, we *never* fear'd! and as for  
 these,  
 We broke them on the land, we drove  
 them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the  
 people muse  
 In doubt if you be of our Barons'  
 breed—

Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-  
mede?

O fallen nobility that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of  
this monstrous fraud!

*We* feel, at least, that silence here  
were sin,

Not ours the fault if we have  
feeble hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with  
naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they  
had to guard;

For us, we will not spare the tyrant  
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester  
may bawl,

What England was, shall her true  
sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her  
honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall  
stand,

And hold against the world this honor  
of the land.

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL  
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXAN-  
DROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDIN-  
BURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove  
for power—

Whose will is lord thro' all his  
world-domain—

Who made the serf a man, and burst  
his chain—

Has given our Prince his own impe-  
rial Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a peo-  
ple's pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin  
to blow!

From love to love, from home to  
home you go,

From mother unto mother, stately  
bride,

Marie Alexandrovna!

II

The golden news along the steppes is  
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents  
are stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have  
heard;

And all the sultry palms of India  
known,

Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea

On capes of Afric as on cliffs of  
Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-  
nent,

And loyal pines of Canada murmur  
thee,

Marie Alexandrovna!

III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty  
life!—

Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-  
man swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to  
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne  
a wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs  
that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and  
flow;

But who love best have best the  
grace to know

That Love by right divine is deathless  
king,

Marie Alexandrovna!

IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
land





## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Sleep, little ladies!  
Wake not soon!  
Echo on echo  
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars  
Peep'd into the shell.  
'What are they dreaming of?  
Who can tell?'

Started a green linnet  
Out of the croft;  
Wake, little ladies!  
The sun is aloft!

### THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,  
And with it a spiteful letter.  
My name in song has done him much  
wrong,  
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,  
If men neglect your pages?  
I think not much of yours or of mine,  
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of  
the times!  
Are mine for the moment stronger?  
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;  
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as  
brief;  
What room is left for a hater?  
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener  
leaf,  
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?  
And men will live to see it.  
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;  
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,  
But this is the time of hollies.  
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,  
How I hate the spites and the fol-  
lies!

### LITERARY SQUABBLES

Alas! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shriek and sweat in pigmy  
wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars;

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite;

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot  
hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things  
here;

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer Godlike state  
Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

### THE VICTIM

#### I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low;  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
For on them brake the sudden foe;  
So thick they died the people cried,  
'The Gods are moved against the  
land.'

The Priest in horror about his altar  
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:  
'Help us from famine  
And plague and strife!  
What would you have of us?  
Human life?  
Were it our nearest,  
Were it our dearest,—  
Answer, O answer!—  
We give you his life.'

## WAGES

### II

But still the foeman spoil'd and  
burn'd,  
And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;  
And dead men lay all over the way,  
Or down in a furrow scathed with  
flame;  
And ever and aye the Priesthood  
moan'd,  
Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
came:  
    'The King is happy  
    In child and wife;  
    Take you his dearest,  
    Give us a life.'

### III

The Priest went out by heath and hill;  
The King was hunting in the wild;  
They found the mother sitting still;  
She cast her arms about the child.  
The child was only eight summers old,  
His beauty still with his years in-  
creased,  
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold;  
He seem'd a victim due to the  
priest.  
    The Priest beheld him,  
    And cried with joy.  
    'The Gods have answer'd;  
    We give them the boy.'

### IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
He bore but little game in hand;  
The mother said, 'They have taken the  
child  
To spill his blood and heal the land.  
The land is sick, the people diseased,  
And blight and famine on all the  
lea;  
The holy Gods, they must be ap-  
peased,  
So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
They have taken our son,  
They will have his life.  
Is *he* your dearest?  
Or I, the wife?'

The King bent low, with hand on  
brow,  
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:  
'O wife, what use to answer now?  
For now the Priest has judged for  
me.'  
The King was shaken with holy fear;  
'The Gods,' he said, 'would have  
chosen well;  
Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
And which the dearest I cannot  
tell!  
But the Priest was happy,  
His victim won:  
'We have his dearest,  
His only son!'

### VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
The knife uprising toward the blow,  
To the altar-stone she sprang alone:  
'Me, not my darling, no!'  
He caught her away with a sudden  
cry;  
Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
And shrieking, 'I am his dearest, I—  
I am his dearest!' rush'd on the  
knife.  
And the Priest was happy:  
'O Father Odin,  
We give you a life.  
Which was his nearest?  
Who was his dearest?  
The Gods have answer'd;  
We give them the wife!'

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator,  
glory of song,  
Paid with a voice flying by to be  
lost on an endless sea—  
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle,  
to right the wrong—  
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no  
lover of glory she;  
Give her the glory of going on, and  
still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages  
of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for  
the life of the worm and the  
fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no  
quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask  
in a summer sky;  
Give her the wages of going on, and  
not to die.

### THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,  
the hills and the plains,—  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of  
Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not  
that which He seems?  
Dreams are true while they last, and  
do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of  
body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy  
division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art  
the reason why,  
For is He not all but thou, that hast  
power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and  
thou fulfillest thy doom,  
Making Him broken gleams and a  
stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and  
Spirit with Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and  
nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and  
let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder  
is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all,  
says the fool,  
For all we have power to see is a  
straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and  
the eye of man cannot see;  
But if we could see and hear, this  
Vision—were it not He?

### THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

THE voice and the Peak  
Far over summit and lawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn!

#### II

All night have I heard the voice  
Rave over the rocky bar,  
But thou wert silent in heaven,  
Above thee glided the star.

#### III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all?  
'I am the voice of the Peak,  
I roar and rave, for I fall.

#### IV

'A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West;  
They leave the heights and are trou-  
bled,  
And moan and sink to their rest.

'The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom;  
But they—they feel the desire of the  
deep—  
Fall, and follow their doom.

#### VI

'The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the  
deep;  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep.'

# LUCRETIVS

## VII

Not raised for ever and ever,  
But when their cycle is o'er,  
The valley, the voice, the peak, the  
star  
Pass, and are found no more.

## VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd  
At his highest with sunrise fire;  
The Peak is high, and the stars are  
high,  
And the thought of a man is higher.

## IX

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height!  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight.

The voice and the Peak  
Far into heaven withdrawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn!

## 'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL'

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my  
hand,  
Little flower—but if I could under-  
stand  
What you are, root and all, and all in  
all,  
I should know what God and man is.

## LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morn-  
ing flush

Of passion and the first embrace had  
died  
Between them, tho' he loved her none  
the less,  
Yet often when the woman heard his  
foot  
Return from pacings in the field, and  
ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master  
took  
Small notice, or austere, for—his  
mind  
Half buried in some weightier argu-  
ment<sup>9</sup>  
Or fancy-born perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the hexameter—he  
past  
To turn and ponder those three hun-  
dred scrolls  
Left by the Teacher, whom he held  
divine.  
She brook'd it not, but wrathful, petu-  
lant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and  
found a witch  
Who brew'd the philtre which had  
power, they said,  
To lead an errant passion home again.  
And this, at times, she mingled with  
his drink,  
And this destroy'd him; for the  
wicked broth  
Confused the chemic labor of the  
blood,<sup>20</sup>  
And tickling the brute brain within  
the man's  
Made havoc among those tender cells,  
and check'd  
His power to shape. He loathed him-  
self, and once  
After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mock'd him with returning calm,  
and cried:  
  
'Storm in the night! for thrice I  
heard the rain  
Rushing; and once the flash of a thun-  
derbolt—  
Methought I never saw so fierce a  
fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-  
side, and show'd<sup>29</sup>  
A riotous confluence of watercourses

Blanching and billowing in a hollow  
of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-  
dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
Gods, what dreams!  
For thrice I waken'd after dreams.  
Perchance

We do but recollect the dreams that  
come  
Just ere the waking. Terrible: for it  
seem'd

A void was made in Nature; all her  
bonds  
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams

And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane, <sup>40</sup>  
Fly on to clash together again, and  
make

Another and another frame of things  
For ever. That was mine, my dream,  
I knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland; but the  
next!

I thought that all the blood by Sylla  
shed

Came driving rainlike down again on  
earth,

And where it dash'd the reddening  
meadow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean  
teeth, <sup>50</sup>

For these I thought my dream would  
show to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that  
made

The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet  
Gods.

And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
round me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and  
saw—

Was it the first beam of my latest  
day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
out the breasts, <sup>60</sup>

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly  
a sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty; and as I stared, a  
fire,

The fire that left a roofless Ilion,  
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me  
that I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,

Because I would not one of thine own  
doves

Not even a rose, were offer'd to thee?  
thine,

Forgetful how my rich procemion  
makes <sup>70</sup>

Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My  
tongue

Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of  
these

Angers thee most, or angers thee at  
all?

Not if thou be'st of those who, far  
aloof

From envy, hate and pity, and spite  
and scorn,

Live the great life which all our great-  
est fain

Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves <sup>80</sup>

Touch, and be touch'd, then would I  
cry to thee

To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender  
arms

Round him, and keep him from the  
lust of blood

That makes a steaming slaughter-  
house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant  
not her

Whom all the pines of Ida shook to  
see

Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,  
 and tempt  
 The Trojan, while his neatherds were  
 abroad;  
 Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
 wept  
 Her deity false in human-amorous  
 tears; 90  
 Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
 Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
 Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
 Calliope to grace his golden verse—  
 Ay, and this Kypri also—did I take  
 That popular name of thine to shadow  
 forth  
 The all-generating powers and genial  
 heat  
 Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
 thick blood  
 Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
 are glad  
 Nosing the mother's udder, and the  
 bird 100  
 Makes his heart voice amid the blaze  
 of flowers;  
 Which things appear the work of  
 mighty Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is  
 left  
 Unfinish'd—if I go. The Gods, who  
 haunt  
 The lucid interspace of world and  
 world,  
 Where never creeps a cloud, or moves  
 a wind,  
 Nor ever falls the least white star of  
 snow,  
 Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
 Nor sound of human sorrow mounts  
 to mar  
 Their sacred everlasting calm! and  
 such, 110  
 Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
 Not such, nor all unlike it, man may  
 gain  
 Letting his own life go. The Gods, the  
 Gods!  
 If all be atoms, how then should the  
 Gods  
 Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
 Not follow the great law? My master  
 held

That Gods there are, for all men so  
 believe.  
 I prest my footsteps into his, and  
 meant  
 Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
 Of flowery clauses onward to the  
 proof 120  
 That Gods there are, and deathless.  
 Meant? I meant?  
 I have forgotten what I meant; my  
 mind  
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are  
 lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods,  
 the Sun,  
 Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
 All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
 Has mounted yonder; since he never  
 sware,  
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
 wretched man,  
 That he would only shine among the  
 dead  
 Hereafter—tales! for never yet on  
 earth 130  
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of  
 roasting ox  
 Moan round the spit—nor knows he  
 what he sees;  
 King of the East altho' he seem, and  
 girt  
 With song and flame and fragrance,  
 slowly lifts  
 His golden feet on those empurpled  
 stairs  
 That climb into the windy halls of  
 heaven  
 And here he glances on an eye new-  
 born,  
 And gets for greeting but a wail of  
 pain;  
 And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
 That fain would gaze upon him to the  
 last, 140  
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fallen  
 And closed by those who mourn a  
 friend in vain,  
 Not thankful that his troubles are no  
 more.  
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell

Whether I mean this day to end my-  
self,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit  
the post  
Allotted by the Gods. But he that  
holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need  
he care <sup>150</sup>  
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge  
at once,  
Being troubled, wholly out of sight,  
and sink  
Past earthquake—ay, and gout and  
stone, that break  
Body toward death, and palsy, death-  
in-life,  
And wretched age—and worst disease  
of all,  
These prodigies of myriad naked-  
nesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-  
able,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
Not welcome, harpies miring every  
dish,  
The phantom husks of something  
foully done, <sup>160</sup>  
And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-  
verse,  
And blasting the long quiet of my  
breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it  
loved them, clasp  
These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like  
the flakes  
In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-  
force  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an  
hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and  
bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their  
rags and they <sup>170</sup>  
The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me  
again

Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,  
Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
storm,  
At random ravage? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his  
cloudy slough,  
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and  
within  
All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
men? <sup>180</sup>

'But who was he that in the garden  
snared  
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in my-  
self—  
For look! what is it? there? yon arbu-  
tus  
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering—  
The mountain quickens into Nymph  
and Faun;  
And here an Oread—how the sun de-  
lights  
To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,  
And rosy knees and supple rounded-  
ness, <sup>190</sup>  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this  
way runs  
Before the rest!—A satyr, a satyr,  
see,  
Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
Twy-natured is no nature. Yet he  
draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him  
now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his  
kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-  
brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender.  
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and  
she  
Loathes him as well; such a precipi-  
tate heel, <sup>200</sup>  
Fledged as it were with Mercury's  
ankle-wing,  
Whirls her to me—but will she fling  
herself



# LUCRETIVS

Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-foot! nay,  
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtded wilderness,  
 And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—  
 What?—that the bush were leafless? or to whelm  
 All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,  
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
 From childly wont and ancient use I call—  
 I thought I lived securely as yourselves—<sup>210</sup>  
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spice,  
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none;  
 No larger feast than under plane or pine  
 With neighbors laid along the grass, to take  
 Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
 Affirming each his own philosophy—  
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
 But now it seems some unseen monster lays  
 His vast and filthy hands upon my will,<sup>220</sup>  
 Wrenching it backward into his, and spoils  
 My bliss in being; and it was not great,  
 For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,  
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
 Tired of so much within our little life,  
 Or of so little in our little life—  
 Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—  
 And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,<sup>230</sup>  
 Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,

Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—  
 What beast has heart to do it? And what man,  
 What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?  
 Not I; not he, who bears one name with her  
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,  
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,  
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,  
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.<sup>240</sup>  
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks  
 As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now  
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
 Those blind beginnings that have made me man,  
 Dash then anew together at her will  
 Thro’ all her cycles—into man once more,  
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower.  
 But till this cosmic order everywhere  
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day<sup>250</sup>  
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps  
 Is not so far when momentary man  
 Shall seem no more a something to himself,  
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,  
 And even his bones long laid within the grave,  
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,

My golden work in which I told  
 truth 25.  
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,  
 and plucks  
 The mortal soul from out immortal  
 hell,  
 Shall stand. Ay, surely; then it fails  
 at last  
 And perishes as I must; for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the  
 wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou  
 art  
 Without one pleasure and without one  
 pain,  
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be  
 mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season,  
 thus 270

I woo thee roughly, for thou carest  
 not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so  
 they win—  
 Thus—thus—the soul flies out and  
 dies in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into  
 his side.  
 She heard him raging, heard him fall  
 ran in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
 herself  
 As having fail'd in duty to him  
 shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back  
 fell on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd. He an-  
 swer'd, 'Care not thou!  
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee  
 well' 280

# THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs, as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870

A. TENNYSON

## THE WINDOW

### ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly!  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's  
eye!  
O, is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window-pane,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows  
that cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,  
You are all running on, and I stand on  
the slope of the hill,  
And the winds are up in the  
morning! 10

Follow, follow the chase!  
And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her  
sweet little face?  
And my heart is there before you are  
come, and gone,  
When the winds are up in the  
morning!

Follow them down the slope!  
And I follow them down to the win-  
dow-pane of my dear,  
And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,  
And it darkens and brightens and  
darkens like my fear,  
And the winds are up in the morn-  
ing! 20

### AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a  
flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
Rose, rose and clematis, 30  
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

### GONE

Gone!  
Gone, till the end of the year,

Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
left me in shadow here!

Gone—flitted away,  
Taken the stars from the night and  
the sun from the day!

Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
storm in the air! <sup>40</sup>

Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
know not where!

Down in the south is a flash and a  
groan; she is there! she is  
there!

## WINTER

The frost is here,  
And fuel is dear,  
And woods are sear,  
And fires burn clear,  
And frost is here  
And has bitten the heel of the going  
year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
You roll up away from the light <sup>50</sup>  
The blue wood-louse and the plump  
dormouse,  
And the bees are still'd, and the flies  
are kill'd,  
And you bite far into the heart of the  
house,  
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
The woods are all the searer,  
The fuel is all the dearer,  
The fires are all the clearer,  
My spring is all the nearer,  
You have bitten into the heart of the  
earth, <sup>60</sup>  
But not into mine.

## SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song  
Flying here and there,  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
And you with gold for hair!  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
Passing with the weather,  
Men's song and men's love,  
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love, <sup>70</sup>  
And women's love and men's!  
And you my wren with a crown of  
gold,  
You my queen of the wrens!  
You the queen of the wrens—  
We'll be birds of a feather,  
I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
Fine little hands, fine little feet— <sup>80</sup>  
Dewy blue eye.  
Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
Ask her to marry me by and by?  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
Fly; <sup>89</sup>  
Fly to the light in the valley below—  
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye.  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

## NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and  
the rain!  
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
And never a glimpse of her window-  
pane!  
And I may die but the grass will  
grow,  
And the grass will grow when I am  
gone,  
And the wet west wind and the world  
will go on. <sup>99</sup>

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
Ay is life for a hundred years,  
No will push me down to the worm,  
And when I am there and dead and  
gone,  
The wet west wind and the world will  
go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and  
the wet!

Wet west wind, how you blow, you  
blow!

And never a line from my lady yet!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no? <sup>109</sup>  
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone  
The wet west wind and the world may  
go on.

## NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
Take my love, for love will come,

Love will come but once a life.

Winds are loud and winds will pass!  
Spring is here with leaf and grass;

Take my love and be my wife.

After-loves of maids and men <sup>119</sup>  
Are but dainties drest again.

Love me now, you'll love me then;

Love can love but once a life.

## THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,  
Claspt on her seal, my sweet!

Must I take you and break you,  
Two little hands that meet?

I must take you, and break you,  
And loving hands must part—

Take, take—break, break—

Break—you may break my heart. <sup>130</sup>

Faint heart never won—

Break, break, and all's done.

## AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,

Be merry on earth as you never  
were merry before,

Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far  
away,

And merry for ever and ever, and  
one day more.

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,

The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
from out of the pine!

Look how they tumble the blossom, <sup>140</sup>  
the mad little tits

'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' was ever a  
May so fine?

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,  
And swallow and sparrow and thros-  
tle and have your desire!

O merry my heart, you have gotten  
the wings of love,  
And flit like the king of the wrens  
with a crown of fire.

Why?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

## WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes, <sup>150</sup>  
Time slips away.

Sun sets, moon sets,  
Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'

'We shall both be gray.'

'A month hence, a month hence.'

'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'

'Ah, the long delay!'

'Wait a little, wait a little, <sup>160</sup>  
You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
And that's an age away.'

Blaze upon her window, sun,  
And honor all the day.

## MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,  
You send a flash to the sun.

Here is the golden close of love,  
All my wooing is done.

O, the woods and the meadows, <sup>170</sup>  
Woods where we hid from the wet,  
Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
Meadows in which we met!

Light, so low in the vale

You flash and lighten afar,

For this is the golden morning of love,  
And you are his morning star.

Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood,  
 O, lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood! 181

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires?

O heart, are you great enough for  
 love?

I have heard of thorns and briers.  
 Over the thorns and briers,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.

### THE LOVER'S TALE

The original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends, however, who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?  
 May, 1879.

#### ARGUMENT

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

HERE far away, seen from the topmost  
 cliff,  
 Filling with purple gloom the vacan-  
 cies  
 Between the tufted hills, the sloping  
 seas  
 Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way  
 down rare sails,  
 White as white clouds, floated from  
 sky to sky.  
 O pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
 Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
 Where the chafed breakers of the  
 outer sea  
 Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
 And withers on the breast of peaceful  
 love! 10  
 Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
 that fledged  
 The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
 watcheth Love,

In thine own essence, and delight thy-  
 self  
 To make it wholly thine on sunny  
 days.  
 Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'  
 See, sirs,  
 Even now the Goddess of the Past,  
 that takes  
 The heart, and sometimes touches but  
 one string  
 That quivers and is silent, and some-  
 times  
 Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd  
 chords  
 To some old melody, begins to play 20  
 That air which pleased her first. I feel  
 thy breath;  
 I come, great Mistress of the ear and  
 eye;  
 Thy breath is of the pine-wood, and  
 tho' years  
 Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy  
 strait

Betwixt the native land of Love and  
     me,  
 Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
 Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
 The lucid chambers of the morning  
     star,  
 And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
 To pass my hand across my brows, and  
     muse <sup>30</sup>  
 On those dear hills, that nevermore  
     will meet  
 The sight that throbs and aches be-  
     neath my touch,  
 As tho' there beat a heart in either  
     eye;  
 For when the outer lights are darken'd  
     thus,  
 The memory's vision hath a keener

It grows upon me now—the semicircle  
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow  
     fringe  
 Of curving beach—its wreaths of drip-  
     ping green—  
 Its pale pink shells—the summer-  
     house aloft  
 That open'd on the pines with doors  
     of glass, <sup>40</sup>  
 A mountain nest—the pleasure-boat  
     that rock'd,  
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel  
     to keel,  
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the  
     wave  
 That blanch'd upon its side.

    O Love, O Hope!  
 They come, they crowd upon me all at  
     once—  
 Moved from the cloud of unforgotten  
     things,  
 That sometimes on the horizon of the  
     mind  
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
     storm—  
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me  
     —days <sup>49</sup>  
 Of dewy dawning and the amber eves  
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
 Were borne about the bay or safely  
     moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where  
     the tide  
 Splash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all  
     without  
 The slowly-riding rollers on the cliffs  
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and  
     thro' the arch  
 Down those loud waters, like a setting  
     star,  
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-  
     house shone,  
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
 To crown it with herself.

    Here, too, my love <sup>61</sup>  
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
     hung  
 From his mid-dome in heaven's airy  
     halls;  
 Gleams of the water-circles as they  
     broke,  
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about  
     her lips,  
 Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
 Leapt like a passing thought across her  
     yes;  
 And mine with one that will not pass,  
     till earth  
 And heaven pass too, dwelt on my  
     heaven, a face  
 Most starry-fair, but kindled from  
     within <sup>70</sup>  
 As 't were with dawn. She was dark-  
     hair'd, dark-eyed—  
 O, such dark eyes! a single glance of  
     them  
 Will govern a whole life from birth to  
     death,  
 Careless of all things else, led on with  
     light  
 In trances and in visions. Look at  
     them,  
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance;  
 You cannot find their depth; for they  
     go back,  
 And farther back, and still withdraw  
     themselves  
 Quite into the deep soul, that ever-  
     more  
 Fresh springing from her fountains in  
     the brain, <sup>80</sup>

Still pouring thro', floods with redun-  
dant life  
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago  
I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me. I had died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest  
ebb,

Thine image, like a charm of light and  
strength

Upon the waters, push'd me back  
again

On these deserted sands of barren life.  
Tho' from the deep vault where the  
heart of Hope <sup>90</sup>

Fell into dust, and crumbled in the  
dark—

Forgetting how to render beautiful  
Her countenance with quick and  
healthful blood—

Thou didst not sway me upward;  
could I perish

While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
quiet urn

For ever? He that saith it hath o'er-  
stept

The slippery footing of his narrow  
wit,

And fallen away from judgment. Thou  
art light,

To which my spirit leaneth all her  
flowers, <sup>100</sup>

And length of days, and immortality  
Of thought, and freshness ever self-  
renew'd.

For Time and Grief abode too long  
with Life,

And, like all other friends i' the world,  
at last

They grew weary of her fellowship.  
So Time and Grief did beckon unto

Death,  
And Death drew nigh and beat the  
doors of Life;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner  
house,

A wakeful portress, and didst parle  
with Death,—

'This is a charmed dwelling which I  
hold;' <sup>110</sup>

So Death gave back, and would no  
further come.

Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal herit-  
age,

The Present is the vassal of the Past:  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having  
been—

A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of  
place;

A body journeying onward, sick with  
toil, <sup>120</sup>

The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my  
heart,

And all the senses weaken'd, save in  
that,

Which long ago they had glean'd and  
garner'd up

Into the granaries of memory—  
The clear brow, bulwark of the pre-  
cious brain,

Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and  
all the while

The light soul twines and mingles with  
the growths

Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
Married, made one with, molten into  
all <sup>130</sup>

The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
And like the all-enduring camel,  
driven

Far from the diamond fountain by  
the palms,

Who toils across the middle moonlit  
nights,

Or when the white heats of the blind-  
ing noons

Beat from the concave sand; yet in  
him keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that  
he loves,

To stay his feet from falling and his  
spirit

From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
When I began to love. How should I  
tell you? <sup>140</sup>

Or from the after-fulness of my heart,



Flow back again unto my slender  
 spring  
 And first of love, tho' every turn and  
 depth  
 Between is clearer in my life than all  
 Its present flow. Ye know not what ye  
 ask.  
 How should the broad and open flower  
 tell  
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest  
 together  
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken  
 folds,  
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-  
 self,  
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it  
 seem'd? 150  
 For young Life knows not when young  
 Life was born,  
 But takes it all for granted: neither  
 Love,  
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-  
 member  
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-  
 fied,  
 Looking on her that brought him to  
 the light;  
 Or as men know not when they fall  
 asleep  
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
 So know I not when I began to love.  
 This is my sum of knowledge—that  
 my love  
 Grew with myself—say rather, was  
 my growth, 160  
 My inward sap, the hold I have on  
 earth,  
 My outward circling air wherewith I  
 breathe,  
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-  
 more  
 Is to me daily life and daily death.  
 For how should I have lived and not  
 have loved?  
 Can ye take off the sweetness from the  
 flower,  
 The color and the sweetness from the  
 rose,  
 And place them by themselves; or set  
 apart  
 Their motions and their brightness  
 from the stars,

And then point out the flower or the  
 star? 170  
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and  
 love,  
 And tell me where I am? 'T is even  
 thus:  
 In that I live I love; because I love  
 I live. Whate'er is fountain to the one  
 Is fountain to the other; and whene'er  
 Our God unknots the riddle of the one,  
 There is no shade or fold of mystery  
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years—  
 For they seem many and my most of  
 life,  
 And well I could have linger'd in that  
 porch, 180  
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-  
 place,—  
 In the May-dews of childhood, oppo-  
 site  
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived  
 together,  
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father  
 died,  
 And he was happy that he saw it not;  
 But I and the first daisy on his grave  
 From the same clay came into light at  
 once.  
 As Love and I do number equal years,  
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
 How like each other was the birth of  
 each! 191  
 On the same morning, almost the same  
 hour,  
 Under the selfsame aspect of the  
 stars—  
 O, falsehood of all star-craft!—we  
 were born.  
 How like each other was the birth of  
 each!  
 The sister of my mother—she that  
 bore  
 Camilla close beneath her beating  
 heart,  
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the  
 child,  
 With its true-touched pulses in the  
 flow  
 And hourly visitation of the blood, 200

Sent notes of preparation manifold,  
 And mellow'd echoes of the outer  
     world—  
 My mother's sister, mother of my  
     love,  
 Who had a twofold claim upon my  
     heart,  
 One twofold mightier than the other  
     was,  
 In giving so much beauty to the world,  
 And so much wealth as God had  
     charged her with—  
 Loathing to put it from herself for  
     ever,  
 Left her own life with it; and dying  
     thus,  
 Crown'd with her highest act the  
     placid face 210  
 And breathless body of her good deeds  
     past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She  
     was motherless,  
 And I without a father. So from each  
 Of those two pillars which from earth  
     uphold  
 Our childhood, one had fallen away,  
     and all  
 The careful burthen of our tender  
     years  
 Trembled upon the other. He that  
     gave  
 Her life, to me delightfully fulfill'd  
 All loving kindnesses, all offices  
 Of watchful care and trembling ten-  
     derness. 220  
 He waked for both, he pray'd for  
     both, he slept  
 Dreaming of both; nor was his love  
     the less  
 Because it was divided, and shot forth  
 Boughs on each side, laden with whole-  
     some shade,  
 Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister. On one  
     arm  
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
 Wander'd, the while we rested; one  
     soft lap  
 Pillow'd us both; a common light of  
     eyes 230

Was on us as we lay; our baby lips,  
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from  
     thence  
 The stream of life, one stream, one  
     life, one blood,  
 One sustenance, which, still as thought  
     grew large,  
 Still larger moulding all the house of  
     thought,  
 Made all our tastes and fancies like,  
     perhaps—  
 All—all but one; and strange to me,  
     and sweet,  
 Sweet thro' strange years to know  
     that whatsoe'er  
 Our general mother meant for me  
     alone,  
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of  
     us. 240  
 So what was earliest mine in earliest  
     life,  
 I shared with her in whom myself re-  
     mains.

As was our childhood, so our in-  
     fancy,  
 They tell me that we would not be  
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.  
 They tell me that we would not be  
     alone,—  
 We cried when we were parted; when  
     I wept,  
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my  
     tears,  
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we  
     loved  
 The sound of one another's voices  
     more 250  
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,  
     and learn'd  
 To lisp in tune together; that we slept  
 In the same cradle always, face to  
     face,  
 Heart beating time to heart, lip press-  
     ing lip,  
 Folding each other, breathing on each  
     other,  
 Dreaming together—dreaming of each  
     other,  
 They should have added,—till the  
     morning light  
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
     pane

Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we  
 woke  
 To gaze upon each other. If this be  
 true, 260  
 At thought of which my whole soul  
 languishes  
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no  
 breath—as tho'  
 A man in some still garden should in-  
 fuse  
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and  
 overfull  
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
 It fall on its own thorns—if this be  
 true—  
 And that way my wish leads me ever-  
 more  
 Still to believe it, 't is so sweet a  
 thought—  
 Why in the utter stillness of the soul  
 Doth question'd memory answer not,  
 nor tell 271  
 Of this our earliest, our closest-  
 drawn,  
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest  
 harmony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely  
 house,  
 Green prelude, April promise, glad  
 new-year  
 Of being, which with earliest violets  
 And lavish carol of clear-throated  
 larks  
 Fill'd all the March of life!—I will  
 not speak of thee,  
 These have not seen thee, these can  
 never know thee,  
 They cannot understand me. Pass we  
 then 280  
 A term of eighteen years. Ye would  
 but laugh  
 If I should tell you how I hoard in  
 thought  
 The faded rhymes and scraps of an-  
 cient crones,  
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the  
 world,  
 Which are as gems set in my memory,  
 Because she learnt them with me; or  
 what use  
 To know her father left us just before

The daffodil was blown? or how we  
 found  
 The dead man cast upon the shore?  
 All this  
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your  
 minds 290  
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark  
 of mine  
 Is traced with flame. Move with me  
 to the event.

There came a glorious morning,  
 such a one  
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
 On such a morning would have flung  
 himself  
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
 balanced wings  
 To some tall mountain. When I said  
 to her,  
 'A day for gods to stoop,' she an-  
 swered, 'Ay,  
 And men to soar;' for as that other  
 gazed,  
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
 The prophet and the chariot and the  
 steeds, 301  
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
 stood,  
 When first we came from out the pines  
 at noon,  
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and  
 almost  
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
 heaven,  
 So bathed we were in brilliance. Never  
 yet  
 Before or after have I known the  
 spring  
 Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
 Into the middle summer; for that day  
 Love, rising, shook his wings, and  
 charged the winds 311  
 With spiced May-sweets from bound  
 to bound, and blew  
 Fresh fire into the sun, and from  
 within  
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent  
 his soul  
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd  
 far-off

His mountain-altars, his high hills,  
     with flame  
 Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound;  
 The great pine shook with lonely  
     sounds of joy  
 That came on the sea-wind. As moun-  
     tain streams  
 Our bloods ran free; the sunshine  
     seem'd to brood <sup>320</sup>  
 More warmly on the heart than on the  
     brow.  
 We often paused, and, looking back,  
     we saw  
 The clefts and openings in the moun-  
     tains fill'd  
 With the blue valley and the glistening  
     brooks,  
 And all the low dark groves, a land of  
     love!  
 A land of promise, a land of memory,  
 A land of promise flowing with the  
     milk  
 And honey of delicious memories!  
 And down to sea, and far as eye could  
     ken,  
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy  
     Land, <sup>330</sup>  
 Still growing holier as you near'd the  
     bay,  
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
 'The grassy platform on some hill, I  
     stoop'd,  
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
     brows  
 And mine made garlands of the self-  
     same flower,  
 Which she took smiling, and with my  
     work thus  
 Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or  
     twice she told me—  
 For I remember all things—to let  
     grow  
 The flowers that run poison in their  
     veins.  
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the  
     world.' <sup>340</sup>  
 Then playfully she gave herself the  
     lie—  
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;

So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So  
     I wove  
 Even the dull-blooded poppy-stem,  
     'whose flower,  
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-  
     rise,  
 Like to the wild youth of an evil  
     prince,  
 Is without sweetness,—but who crowns  
     himself  
 Above the naked poisons of his heart  
 In his old age.' A graceful thought of  
     hers  
 Graven on my fancy! And O, how like  
     a nymph, <sup>350</sup>  
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd!  
     how native  
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I  
     gazed  
 My coronal slowly disentwined itself  
 And fell between us both; tho' while I  
     gazed  
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills  
     of bliss  
 That strike across the soul in prayer,  
     and show us  
 That we are surely heard. Methought  
     a light  
 Burst from the garland I had woven,  
     and stood  
 A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
 A light methought broke from her  
     dark, dark eyes, <sup>360</sup>  
 And shot itself into the singing winds;  
 A mystic light flash'd even from her  
     white robe  
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell  
     about  
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came  
 To what our people call 'The Hill of  
     Woe.'  
 A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
     beneath,  
 Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven  
     chasm.  
 And thence one night, when all the  
     winds were loud,  
 A woful man—for so the story went—  
 Had thrust his wife and child and  
     dash'd himself <sup>371</sup>

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
Fierce in the strength of far descent,  
a stream  
Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely  
strown with crags.  
We mounted slowly; yet to both there  
came  
The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking  
down  
On all that had look'd down on us;  
and joy  
In breathing nearer heaven; and joy  
to me, <sup>380</sup>  
High over all the azure-circled earth,  
To breathe with her as if in heaven it-  
self;  
And more than joy that I to her be-  
came  
Her guardian and her angel, raising  
her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she  
saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
brows,  
Arise in open prospect—heath and  
hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the  
lips,  
And steep-down walls of battlemented  
rock <sup>390</sup>  
Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
spires,  
And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and  
steam of gold,  
And over all the great wood rioting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
intervals  
With falling brook or blossom'd bush  
—and last,  
Framing the mighty landscape to the  
west,  
A purple range of mountain-cones, be-  
tween  
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
bursts  
The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length  
Descending from the point, and stand-  
ing both <sup>401</sup>  
There on the tremulous bridge, that  
from beneath  
Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in  
air,  
We paused amid the splendor. All the  
west  
And even unto the middle south was  
ribb'd  
And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The  
sun below,  
Held for a space 'twixt cloud and  
wave, shower'd down  
Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of  
light  
Unparallel'd. On the other side, the  
moon, <sup>410</sup>  
Half-melted into thin blue air, stood  
still,  
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd  
leaf,  
Nor yet endured in presence of His  
eyes  
To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,  
Since in his absence full of light and  
joy,  
And giving light to others. But this  
most,  
Next to her presence whom I loved so  
well,  
Spoke loudly even into my' inmost  
heart  
As to my outward hearing. The loud  
stream,  
Forth issuing from his portals in the  
crag,— <sup>420</sup>  
A visible link unto the home of my  
heart,—  
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
the sea  
Parting my own loved mountains was  
received,  
Shorn of its strength, into the sym-  
pathy  
Of that small bay, which out to open  
main  
Glow'd intermingling close beneath  
the sun.  
Spirit of Love! that little hour was  
bound,

Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
thee;  
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
and the earth  
They fell on became hallow'd ever-  
more. 430

We turn'd, our eyes met; hers were  
bright, and mine  
Were dim with floating tears, that shot  
the sunset  
In lightnings round me, and my name  
was borne  
Upon her breath. Henceforth my  
name has been  
A hallow'd memory like the names of  
old,  
A centred, glory-circled memory,  
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
Exchange or currency; and in that  
hour  
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden  
mist  
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious  
airs, 440  
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
shatter it,  
Waver'd and floated—which was less  
than Hope,  
Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
Hope;  
But which was more and higher than  
all Hope,  
Because all other Hope had lower aim;  
Even that this name to which her  
gracious lips  
Did lend such gentle utterance, this  
one name,  
In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
wreath—  
How lovelier, nobler then!—her life,  
her love,  
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and  
heart and strength. 450  
'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd  
henceforth  
The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O  
sister,  
My will is one with thine; the Hill of  
Hope.'  
Nevertheless, we did not change the  
name.

I did not speak; I could not speak  
my love.  
Love lieth deep, Love dwells not in  
lip-depths.  
Love wraps his wings on either side  
the heart,  
Constraining it with kisses close and  
warm,  
Absorbing all the incense of sweet  
thoughts  
So that they pass not to the shrine of  
sound. 460  
Else had the life of that delighted hour  
Drunk in the largeness of the utter-  
ance  
Of Love; but how should earthly  
measure mete  
The heavenly-unmeasured or unlim-  
ited Love,  
Who scarce can tune his high majes-  
tic sense  
Unto the thunder-song that wheels the  
spheres,  
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
And flowing odor of the spacious air,  
Scarce housed within the circle of this  
earth,  
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
Which pass with that which breathes  
them? Sooner earth 471  
Might go round heaven, and the strait  
girth of Time  
Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
Than language grasp the infinite of  
Love.

O day which did enwomb that  
happy hour,  
Thou art blessed in the years, divinest  
day!  
O Genius of that hour which dost up-  
hold  
Thy coronal of glory like a god,  
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
Who walk before thee, ever turning  
round 480  
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are  
dim  
With dwelling on the light and depth  
of thine,  
Thy name is ever worshipp'd among  
hours!

Had I died then, I had not seem'd to  
die,  
For bliss stood round me like the light  
of heaven,—  
Had I died then, I had not known the  
death;  
Yea, had the Power from whose right  
hand the light  
Of Life issueth, and from whose left  
hand floweth  
The Shadow of Death, perennial ef-  
fluences,  
Whereof to all that draw the whole-  
some air, <sup>490</sup>  
Somewhile the one must overflow the  
other—  
Then had he stemm'd my day with  
night, and driven  
My current to the fountain whence it  
sprang,—  
Even his own abiding excellence—  
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom  
had fallen  
Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,  
Which seeming for the moment due to  
death,  
And dipping his head low beneath the  
verge,  
Yet bearing round about him his own  
day, <sup>500</sup>  
In confidence of unabated strength,  
Steppeth from heaven to heaven, from  
light to light,  
And holdeth his undimmed forehead  
far  
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-  
ward hill;  
We past from light to dark. On the  
other side  
Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain  
hall,  
Which none have fathom'd. If you go  
far in—  
The country people rumor—you may  
hear  
The moaning of the woman and the  
child, <sup>510</sup>  
Shut in the secret chambers of the  
rock.

I too have heard a sound—perchance  
of streams  
Running far on within its inmost halls,  
The home of darkness; but the cav-  
ern-mouth,  
Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that  
passing lightly  
Adown a natural stair of tangled roots  
Is presently received in a sweet grave  
Of eglantines, a place of burial  
Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-  
seen, <sup>520</sup>  
But taken with the sweetness of the  
place,  
It makes a constant bubbling melody  
That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower  
down  
Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-  
ing, leaves  
Low banks of yellow sand; and from  
the woods  
That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-  
presses,—  
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal  
woe,  
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,  
And sitting down upon the golden  
moss,  
Held converse sweet and low—low  
converse sweet, <sup>530</sup>  
In which our voices bore least part.  
The wind  
Told a love-tale beside us, how he  
woo'd  
The waters, and the waters answering  
lisp'd  
To kisses of the wind, that, sick with  
love,  
Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
To utterance of passion. Ye cannot  
shape  
Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
Methought all excellence that ever  
was  
Had drawn herself from many thou-  
sand years,  
And all the separate Edens of this  
earth, <sup>540</sup>  
To centre in this place and time. I lis-  
ten'd.

And her words stole with most pre-  
 vailing sweetness  
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies  
 come  
 To boys and girls when summer days  
 are new,  
 And soul and heart and body are all  
 at ease.  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a  
 place,  
 And I was as the brother of her blood,  
 And by that name I moved upon her  
 breath;  
 Dear name, which had too much of  
 nearness in it 550  
 And heralded the distance of this  
 time!  
 At first her voice was very sweet and  
 low,  
 As if she were afraid of utterance;  
 But in the onward current of her  
 speech,—  
 As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
 Are fashion'd by the channel which  
 they keep,—  
 Her words did of their meaning bor-  
 row sound,  
 Her cheek did catch the color of her  
 words.  
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but  
 hear;  
 My heart paused—my raised eyelids  
 would not fall, 560  
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood  
 still,  
 And saw the motion of all other  
 things;  
 While her words, syllable by syllable,  
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my  
 ear  
 Fell, and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not  
 to speak;  
 But she spake on, for I did name no  
 wish.  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all  
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and  
 Love—  
 'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd'? Even  
 then the stars 570  
 Did tremble in their stations as I  
 gazed;

But she spake on, for I did name no  
 wish,  
 No wish—no hope. Hope was not  
 wholly dead,  
 But breathing hard at the approach of  
 death,—  
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
 No longer in the dearest sense of  
 mine—  
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
 And all the maiden empire of her  
 mind,  
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
 There, where I hoped myself to reign  
 as king, 580  
 There, where that day I crown'd my-  
 self as king,  
 There in my realm and even on my  
 throne,  
*Another!* Then it seem'd as tho' a link  
 Of some tight chain within my inmost  
 frame  
 Was riven in twain; that life I heeded  
 not  
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of  
 the grave,  
 The darkness of the grave and utter  
 night,  
 Did swallow up my vision; at her  
 feet,  
 Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
 Smit with exceeding sorrow unto  
 death. 590  
 Then had the earth beneath me  
 yawning cloven  
 With such a sound as when an iceberg  
 splits  
 From cope to base—had Heaven from  
 all her doors,  
 With all her golden thresholds clash-  
 ing, roll'd  
 Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as  
 dead,  
 Mute, blind, and motionless as then I  
 lay;  
 Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
 for me!  
 Mute, for henceforth what use were  
 words to me?  
 Blind, for the day was as the night to  
 me!



## THE LOVER'S TALE

The night to me was kinder than the  
     day; 600  
 The night in pity took away my day,  
 Because my grief as yet was newly  
     born  
 Of eyes too weak to look upon the  
     light;  
 And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
 Frail Life was startled from the ten-  
     der love  
 Of him she brooded over. Would I had  
     lain  
 Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
 Round my worn limbs, and the wild  
     brier had driven  
 Its knotted thorns thro' my unpain-  
     ing brows,  
 Leaning its roses on my faded eyes. 610  
 The wind had blown above me, and  
     the rain  
 Had fallen upon me, and the gilded  
     snake  
 Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
     Love,  
 But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.  
     All too soon  
 Life—like a wanton, too-officious  
     friend,  
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and  
     rude  
 With proffer of unwish'd-for serv-  
     ices—  
 Entering all the avenues of sense  
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
 With hated warmth of apprehensive-  
     ness. 621  
 And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
     brook  
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
     to hear  
 Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
     hears,  
 Who with his head below the surface  
     dropt  
 Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
 Of the confused floods, and dimly  
     knows  
 His head shall rise no more; and then  
     came in  
 The white light of the weary moon  
     above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
 Was my sight drunk that it did shap-  
     to me 631  
 Him who should own that name?  
     Were it not well  
 If so be that the echo of that name  
 Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
 A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
 It should attach to? Phantom!—had  
     the ghastliest  
 That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
 The foul steam of the grave to thicker,  
     by it,  
 There in the shuddering moonlight  
     brought its face  
 And what it has for eyes as close to  
     mine 640  
 As he did—better that than his, than  
     he  
 The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the  
     beloved,  
 The loved, the lover, the happy  
     Lionel,  
 The low-voiced, tender-spirited  
     Lionel,  
 All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
 O, how her choice did leap forth from  
     his eyes!  
 O, how her love did clothe itself in  
     smiles  
 About his lips! and—not one mo-  
     ment's grace—  
 Then when the effect weigh'd sea  
     upon my head  
 To come my way! to twit me with the  
     cause! 650  
 Was not the land as free thro' all  
     her ways  
 To him as me? Was not his wont to  
     walk  
 Between the going light and growing  
     night?  
 Had I not learnt my loss before he  
     came?  
 Could that be more because he came  
     my way?  
 Why should he not come my way if he  
     would?  
 And yet to-night, to-night—when all  
     my wealth  
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I  
     fell

Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he  
     come my way  
 Robed in those robes of light I must  
     not wear, 660  
 With that great crown of beams about  
     his brows—  
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
 To tell him of the bliss he had with  
     God—  
 Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
 That scarce can wait the reading of  
     the will  
 Before he takes possession? Was mine  
     a mood  
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
 A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with  
     Grief;  
 She took the body of my past delight,  
 Narded and swathed and balm'd it for  
     herself, 671  
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
 Never to rise again. I was led mute  
 Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
 I was the High Priest in her holiest  
     place,  
 Not to be loudly broken in upon.

O friend, thoughts deep and heavy  
     as these well-nigh  
 O'erbore the limits of my brain: but  
     he  
 Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm  
     upstay'd.  
 I thought it was an adder's fold, and  
     once 680  
 I strove to disengage myself, but  
     fail'd,  
 Being so feeble. She bent above me,  
     too;  
 Wan was her cheek, for whatsoe'er *'t*  
     blight  
 Lives in the dewy touch of pity had  
     made  
 The red rose there a pale one—and her  
     eyes—  
 I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
     tears—  
 And some few drops of that distress-  
     ful rain  
 Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
     moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze,  
     and brush'd 689  
 My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
 For in the sudden anguish of her heart  
 Loosed from their simple thrall they  
     had flow'd abroad,  
 And floated on and parted round her  
     neck,  
 Mantling her form halfway. She, when  
     I woke,  
 Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
     and ask'd,  
 Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the  
     sound  
 Of that dear voice so musically low,  
 And now first heard with any sense of  
     pain,  
 As it had taken life away before,  
 Choked all the syllables that strove to  
     rise 700  
 From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
 From his great hoard of happiness  
     distill'd  
 Some drops of solace; like a vain rich  
     man,  
 That, having always prosper'd in the  
     world,  
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
     words  
 To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in  
     truth,  
 Fair speech was his and delicate of  
     phrase,  
 Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
     dress'd  
 More to the inward than the outward  
     ear,  
 As rain of the midsummer midnight  
     soft, 710  
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and  
     the green  
 Of the dead spring: but mine was  
     wholly dead,  
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for  
     me.  
 Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
     wrong?  
 And why was I to darken their pure  
     love?  
 If, as I found, they two did love each  
     other,

Because my own was darken'd? Why  
 was I  
 To cross between their happy star and  
 them?  
 To stand a shadow by their shining  
 doors,  
 And vex them with my darkness? Did  
 I love her? <sup>720</sup>  
 Ye know that I did love her; to this  
 present  
 My full-orb'd love has waned not.  
 Did I love her,  
 And could I look upon her tearful  
 eyes?  
 What had *she* done to weep? Why  
 should *she* weep?  
 O innocent of spirit—let my heart  
 Break rather—whom the gentlest airs  
 of heaven  
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-  
 ness.  
 Her love did murder mine? What  
 then? She deem'd  
 I wore a brother's mind; she call'd me  
 brother,  
 She told me all her love; she shall not  
 weep. <sup>730</sup>

The brightness of a burning  
 thought, awhile  
 In battle with the glooms of my dark  
 will,  
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd  
 woe  
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own  
 death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in  
 Love;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she  
 loved,  
 And laid it in her own, and sent my  
 cry  
 Thro' the blank night to Him who  
 loving made <sup>740</sup>  
 The happy and the unhappy love, that  
 He  
 Would hold the hand of blessing over  
 them,  
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,  
 his bride!

Let them so love that men and boys  
 may say,  
 'Lo! how they love each other!' till  
 their love  
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
 Known, when their faces are forgot in  
 the land—  
 One golden dream of love, from which  
 may death  
 Awake them with heaven's music in a  
 life  
 More living to some happier happi-  
 ness, <sup>750</sup>  
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.  
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—  
 The dew of tears is an unwholesome  
 dew,  
 They will but sicken the sick plant the  
 more.  
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers  
 do,  
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters  
 do;  
 Or if thou dream aught farther, dream  
 but how  
 I could have loved thee, had there  
 been none else  
 To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
 spake, <sup>760</sup>  
 When I beheld her weep so ruefully;  
 For sure my love should ne'er indue  
 the front  
 And mask of Hate, who lives on oth-  
 ers' moans.  
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
 draughts,  
 And batten on her poisons? Love for-  
 bid!  
 Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
 Hate,  
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof  
 of Love.  
 O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up  
 these tears  
 Shed for the love of Love; for tho'  
 mine image,  
 The subject of thy power, be cold in  
 her, <sup>770</sup>  
 Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
 source

Of these sad tears, and feeds their  
 downward flow.  
 So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
 death,  
 Received unto himself a part of  
 blame,  
 Being guiltless, as an innocent pris-  
 oner,  
 Who, when the woeful sentence hath  
 been past,  
 And all the clearness of his fame hath  
 gone  
 Beneath the shadow of the curse of  
 man,  
 First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
 awaked,  
 And looking round upon his tearful  
 friends, <sup>780</sup>  
 Forthwith and in his agony conceives  
 A shameful sense as of a cleaving  
 crime—  
 For whence without some guilt should  
 such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
 abysm  
 Of forms outworn, but not to me out-  
 worn,  
 Who never hail'd another—was there  
 one?  
 There might be one—one other, worth  
 the life  
 That made it sensible. So that hour  
 died  
 Like odor rapt into the winged wind  
 Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,  
 that they, <sup>791</sup>  
 They—when their love is wreck'd—if  
 Love can wreck—  
 On that sharp ridge of utmost doom  
 ride highly  
 Above the perilous seas of Change and  
 Chance,  
 Nay, more, hold out the lights of  
 cheerfulness;  
 As the tall ship, that many a dreary  
 year  
 Knit to some dismal sandbank far at  
 sea,  
 All thro' the livelong hours of utter  
 dark,

Showers slanting light upon the dol-  
 orous wave.  
 For me—what light, what gleam on  
 those black ways <sup>800</sup>  
 Where Love could walk with banish'd  
 Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, sisters  
 fair;  
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the  
 neck of Hope,  
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew  
 in her breath  
 In that close kiss, and drank her whis-  
 per'd tales.  
 They said that Love would die when  
 Hope was gone,  
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
 after Hope;  
 At last she sought out Memory, and  
 they trod  
 The same old paths where Love had  
 walk'd with Hope,  
 And Memory fed the soul of Love  
 with tears. <sup>810</sup>

## II

From that time forth I would not see  
 her more;  
 But many weary moons I lived alone—  
 Alone, and in the heart of the great  
 forest.  
 Sometimes upon the hills beside the  
 sea  
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of  
 shade,  
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
 sands  
 Insensibly I drew her name, until  
 The meaning of the letters shot into  
 My brain; anon the wanton billow  
 wash'd  
 Them over, till they faded like my  
 love. <sup>10</sup>  
 The hollow caverns heard me—the  
 black brooks  
 Of the mid-forest heard me—the soft  
 winds,  
 Laden with thistle-down and seeds of  
 flowers,  
 Paused in their course to hear me, for  
 my voice

Was all of thee; the merry linnet knew  
 me,  
 The squirrel knew me, and the  
 dragon-fly  
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
 The rough brier tore my bleeding  
 palms; the hemlock,  
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as  
 I past;  
 Yet trod I not the wild-flower in my  
 path,  
 Nor bruised the wild-bird's egg. <sup>20</sup>

Was this the end?  
 Why grew we then together in one  
 plot?  
 Why fed we from one fountain? drew  
 one sun?  
 Why were our mothers branches of  
 one stem?  
 Why were we one in all things, save  
 in that  
 Where to have been one had been the  
 cope and crown  
 Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that  
 same nearness  
 Were father to this distance, and that  
 one  
 Vauntcourier to this *double!* if Affec-  
 tion  
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy  
 hew'd out <sup>30</sup>  
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the  
 hill  
 Where last we roam'd together, for  
 the sound  
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and  
 the wind  
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells.  
 Sometimes  
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
 Fixing my eyes on those three cy-  
 press-cones  
 That spired above the wood; and with  
 mad hand  
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-  
 screen,  
 I cast them in the noisy brook be-  
 neath, <sup>40</sup>  
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd  
 from my sight

Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
 tines.  
 And all the fragments of the living  
 rock,—  
 Huge blocks, which some old trem-  
 bling of the world  
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till  
 they fell  
 Half-digging their own graves,—these  
 in my agony  
 Did I make bare of all the golden  
 moss,  
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
 spring  
 Had liveried them all over. In my  
 brain  
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought  
 to thought, <sup>50</sup>  
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist;  
 my blood  
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my  
 languid limbs;  
 The motions of my heart seem'd far  
 within me,  
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its  
 pulses;  
 And yet it shook me, that my frame  
 would shudder,  
 As if 't were drawn asunder by the  
 rack.  
 But over the deep graves of Hope and  
 Fear,  
 And all the broken palaces of the past,  
 Brooded one master-passion ever-  
 more,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky <sup>60</sup>  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-  
 shock'd,—  
 Hung round with ragged rims and  
 burning folds,—  
 Embathing all with wild and woful  
 hues,  
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed  
 masses  
 Of thunder-shaken columns indistinct,  
 And fused together in the tyrannous  
 light—  
 Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was  
 no more;  
 Some one had told me she was dead,  
 and ask'd

If I would see her burial. Then I  
seem'd 70

To rise, and through the forest-  
shadow borne

With more than mortal swiftness, I  
ran down

The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
The rear of a procession, curving  
round

The silver-sheeted bay, in front of  
which

Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest  
lawn,

Wreathed round the bier with gar-  
lands. In the distance,

From out the yellow woods upon the  
hill

Look'd forth the summit and the pin-  
nacles 80

Of a gray steeple—thence at intervals  
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
Save those six virgins which upheld  
the bier,

Were stoled from head to foot in  
flowing black;

One walk'd abreast with me, and  
veil'd his brow,

And he was loud in weeping and in  
praise

Of her we follow'd. A strong sympathy  
Shook all my soul; I flung myself upon  
him

In tears and cries. I told him all my  
love,

How I had loved her from the first;  
whereat 90

He shrank and howl'd, and from his  
brow drew back

His hand to push me from him, and  
the face,

The very face and form of Lionel  
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-  
most brain,

And at his feet I seem'd to faint and  
fall,

To fall and die away. I could not rise,  
Albeit I strove to follow. They past  
on,

The lordly phantasms! in their float-  
ing folds

They past and were no more; but I  
had fallen

Prone by the dashing runnel on the  
grass. 100

Always the inaudible, invisible  
thought,

Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
Shaped by the audible and visible,  
Moulded the audible and visible.

All crisped sounds of wave and leaf  
and wind

Flatter'd the fancy of my fading  
brain;

The cloud-pavilion'd element, the  
wood,

The mountain, the three cypresses,  
the cave,

Storm, sunset, glows and glories of  
the moon

Below black firs, when silent-creeping  
winds 110

Laid the long night in silver streaks  
and bars,

Were wrought into the tissue of my  
dream.

The moanings in the forest, the loud  
brook,

Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr

Awoke me not, but were a part of  
sleep,

And voices in the distance calling to  
me

And in my vision bidding me dream  
on,

Like sounds without the twilight realm  
of dreams,

Which wander round the bases of the  
hills, 120

And murmur at the low-dropt eaves  
of sleep,

Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end

Opening on darkness, stately vesti-  
bules

To caves and shows of death—  
whether the mind,

With some revenge—even to itself un-  
known—

Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering

view'd had been

Extremest pain; or that the clear-  
 eyed Spirit,  
 Being blunted in the present, grew at  
 length <sup>130</sup>  
 Prophetical and prescient of whate'er  
 The future had in store; or that which  
 most  
 Enchains belief, the sorrow of my  
 spirit  
 Was of so wide a compass it took in  
 All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
 Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
 Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her. About my brow  
 Her warm breath floated in the utter-  
 ance  
 Of silver-chorded tones; her lips were  
 sunder'd <sup>140</sup>  
 With smiles of tranquil bliss, which  
 broke in light  
 Like morning from her eyes—her elo-  
 quent eyes—  
 As I have seen them many a hundred  
 times—  
 Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro'  
 mine down rain'd  
 Their spirit-searching splendors. As a  
 vision  
 Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
 In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
 ground,  
 Confined on points of faith, when  
 strength is shock'd  
 With torment, and expectancy of  
 worse  
 Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged  
 walls, <sup>150</sup>  
 All unawares before his half-shut  
 eyes,  
 Comes in upon him in the dead of  
 night,  
 And with the excess of sweetness and  
 of awe,  
 Makes the heart tremble, and the sight  
 run over  
 Upon his steely gyves; so those fair  
 eyes  
 Shone on my darkness, forms which  
 ever stood  
 Within the magic cirque of memory,  
 Invisible but deathless, waiting still

The edict of the will to reassume <sup>159</sup>  
 The semblance of those rare realities  
 Of which they were the mirrors. Now  
 the light  
 Which was their life burst through the  
 cloud of thought  
 Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I  
 spake,  
 Hung round with paintings of the sea,  
 and one  
 A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved  
 prow  
 Clambering, the mast bent and the  
 ravin wind  
 In her sail roaring. From the outer  
 day,  
 Betwixt the close-set ivies came a  
 broad  
 And solid beam of isolated light, <sup>170</sup>  
 Crowded with driving atomies, and  
 fell  
 Slanting upon that picture, from prime  
 youth  
 Well-known, well-loved. She drew it  
 long ago  
 Forthgazing on the waste and open  
 sea,  
 One morning when the upblown bil'ow  
 ran  
 Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I  
 had pour'd  
 Into the shadowing pencil's naked  
 forms  
 Color and life. It was a bond and seal  
 Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
 smiles; <sup>179</sup>  
 A monument of childhood and of love;  
 The poesy of childhood, my lost love  
 Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it  
 together  
 In mute and glad remembrance, and  
 each heart  
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing  
 like  
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-  
 couch'd—  
 A beauty which is death; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,

Began to heave upon that painted sea.  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
     made the ground <sup>190</sup>  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul,  
     life  
 And breath and motion, past and  
     flow'd away  
 To those unreal billows. Round and  
     round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us;  
     mighty gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
     driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
     shriek'd;  
 My heart was cloven with pain; I  
     wound my arms  
 About her; we whirl'd giddily; the  
     wind  
 Sung, but I clasp'd her without fear.  
     Her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
     eyes, <sup>200</sup>  
 And parted lips which drank her  
     breath, down-hung  
 The jaws of Death. I, groaning, from  
     me flung  
 Her empty phantom; all the sway and  
     whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm,  
     and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
     ever.

## III

I came one day and sat among the  
     stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning  
     cave;  
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran  
     over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and  
     blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells  
     of bud  
 And foliage from the dark and drip-  
     ping woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook  
     and throb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
     height  
 The day had grown I know not. Then  
     came on me <sup>9</sup>

The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd  
     his brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
     bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on  
     the shore  
 Sloped into louder surf. Those that  
     went with me,  
 And those that held the bier before  
     my face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about  
     the bay,  
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd  
     with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I  
     thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to  
     ring, <sup>20</sup>  
 Four merry bells, four merry mar-  
     riage-bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on  
     peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-  
     bells.  
 Then those who led the van, and those  
     in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild  
     Bacchanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the  
     woods.  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the  
     blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids. All at once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt;  
     the bells  
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the  
     surge fell <sup>30</sup>  
 From thunder into whispers; those six  
     maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on  
     the sand  
 Threw down the bier; the woods upon  
     the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-  
     ing down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew it  
     far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas. I turn'd; my  
     heart



Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the  
 hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers.<sup>40</sup>  
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my  
 love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her  
 hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose  
 —a light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips—  
 her eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she  
 climb'd the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that  
 came behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to  
 take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood  
 with me<sup>50</sup>  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down  
 his robes,  
 And claspt her hand in his. Again the  
 bells  
 Jangled and clang'd; again the stormy  
 surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle; and the whirl-  
 ing rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,  
 and fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the  
 woods,  
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant  
 bier.

There, there, my latest vision—then  
 the event!

## IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER<sup>1</sup>

(*Another speaks*)

He flies the event; he leaves the event  
 to me.

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Argument, page 730.

Poor Julian—how he rush'd away; the  
 bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear  
 and heart—  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you  
 saw,  
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well,  
 he had  
 One golden hour—of triumph shall I  
 say?  
 Solace at least—before he left his  
 home.

Would you had seen him in that  
 hour of his!  
 He moved thro' all of it majestically—  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close<sup>10</sup>  
 —but now—  
 Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd; but Lionel and the girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came  
 again  
 Back to his mother's house among the  
 pines.  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains  
 and the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology; he would  
 go,  
 Would leave the land for ever, and  
 had gone<sup>19</sup>  
 Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'  
 Some warning—sent divinely—as it  
 seem'd  
 By that which follow'd—but of this I  
 deem  
 As of the visions that he told—the  
 event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them—tho' he knew  
 it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not  
 look at her—  
 No, not for months; but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's  
 Bay,

Heard yet once more the tolling bell, |  
 and said,  
 'Would you could toll me out of life!' |  
 but found— 30  
 All softly as his mother broke it to  
 him—  
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear  
 For that low knell tolling his lady  
 dead—  
 Dead—and had lain three days with-  
 out a pulse;  
 All that look'd on her had pronounced  
 her dead.  
 And so they bore her—for in Julian's  
 land  
 They never nail a dumb head up in  
 elm—  
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
 heaven,  
 And laid her in the vault of her own  
 kin.

What did he then? not die—he is  
 here and hale— 40  
 Not plunge headforemost from the  
 mountain there,  
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap,  
 not he.  
 He knew the meaning of the whisper  
 now,  
 Thought that he knew it. 'This, I  
 stay'd for this;  
 O Love, I have not seen you for so  
 long!  
 Now, now, will I go down into the  
 grave,  
 I will be all alone with all I love,  
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his no  
 more;  
 The dead returns to me, and I go down  
 To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so  
 He rose and went, and, entering the  
 dim vault 51  
 And making there a sudden light, be-  
 held  
 All round about him that which all  
 will be.  
 The light was but a flash, and went  
 again.  
 Then at the far end of the vault he  
 saw

His lady with the moonlight on her  
 face;  
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
 Of black and bands of silver, which  
 the moon  
 Struck from an open grating over-  
 head  
 High in the wall, and all the rest of  
 her 60  
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of  
 the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass,  
 to sleep,  
 To rest, to be with her—till the great  
 day  
 Peal'd on us with that music which  
 rights all,  
 And raised us hand in hand.' And  
 kneeling there  
 Down in the dreadful dust that once  
 was man,  
 'Dust,' as he said, 'that once was lov-  
 ing hearts,  
 Hearts that had beat with such a love  
 as mine—  
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
 her,— 69  
 He softly put his arm about her neck  
 And kiss'd her more than once, till  
 helpless death  
 And silence made him bold—nay, but  
 I wrong him,  
 He revered his dear lady even in  
 death;  
 But, placing his true hand upon her  
 heart,  
 'O you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not  
 even death  
 Can chill you all at once?'—then, start-  
 ing, thought  
 His dreams had come again. 'Do I  
 wake or sleep?  
 Or am I made immortal, or my love  
 Mortal once more?' It beat—the heart  
 —it beat;  
 Faint—but it beat; at which his own  
 began 80  
 To pulse with such a vehemence that  
 it drown'd  
 The feebler motion underneath his  
 hand.

# THE LOVER'S TALE.

But when at last his doubts were satisfied  
 He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
 And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
 He came in, and now striding fast, and now  
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
 Holding his golden burthen in his arm,  
 So bore her thro' the solitary land  
 Back to the mother's house where she was born. 90

There the good mother's kindly ministering,  
 With half a night's appliances, recalled  
 Her fluttering life. She rais'd an eye that ask'd  
 'Where?' till the things familiar to her youth  
 Had made a silent answer; then she spoke  
 'Here! and how came I here?' and learning it—  
 They told her somewhat rashly, as I think—  
 At once began to wander and to wail,  
 'Ay, but you know that you must give me back.  
 Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was away— 100  
 Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.  
 'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes'—  
 —a wail  
 That, seeming something, yet was nothing, born  
 Not from believing mind but shatter'd nerve,  
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
 At some precipitance in her burial.  
 Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,  
 'O, yes, and you,' she said, 'and none but you?  
 For you have given me life and love again,  
 And none but you yourself shall tell him of it, 110

And you shall give me back when he returns.'  
 'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian, 'here,  
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself;  
 And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
 No, not an hour; but send me notice of him  
 When he returns, and then will I return,  
 And I will make a solemn offering of you  
 To him you love.' And faintly she replied,  
 'And I will do *your* will, and none shall know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be known. 120  
 But all their house was old and loved them both,  
 And all the house had known the loves of both,  
 Had died almost to serve them any way,  
 And all the land was waste and solitary.  
 And then he rode away; but after this,  
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
 Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
 There fever seized upon him. Myself was then 131  
 Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour;  
 And sitting down to such a base repast,  
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
 I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
 The moulder'd stairs—for everything was vile—  
 And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone.

Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land, <sup>140</sup>  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!

But there from fever and my care of him

Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.

For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,

And waited for her message, piece by piece

I learnt the drearier story of his life;  
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,  
Found that the sudden wail his lady made

Dwelt in his fancy. Did he know her worth,

Her beauty even? should he not be taught, <sup>150</sup>

Even by the price that others set upon it,

The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,

I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,  
the soul;

*That* makes the sequel pure, tho' some of us

Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I; and yet I say the bird

That will not hear my call, however sweet,

But if my neighbor whistle answers him— <sup>160</sup>

What matter? there are others in the wood.

Yet when I saw her—and I thought him crazed,

Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper—those dark eyes of hers—

O, such dark eyes! and not her eyes alone,

But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,

For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came

To greet us, her young hero in her arms! <sup>170</sup>

'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me life again.

He, but for you, had never seen it once.

His other father you! Kiss him, and then

Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,

And sent at once to Lionel, praying him,

By that great love they both had borne the dead, <sup>180</sup>

To come and revel for one hour with him

Before he left the land for evermore;  
And then to friends—they were not many—who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,

And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast; I never

Sat at a costlier, for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a

wood,  
Not such as here—an equatorial one,

Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and beneath, <sup>190</sup>

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of art,

Chalice and salver, wines that, heaven knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,

And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups

Where nymph and god ran ever round  
in gold—

Others of glass as costly—some with  
gems

Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah  
heavens!

Why need I tell you all?—suffice to  
say 200

That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest. And  
they, the guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in  
Julian's eyes—

I told you that he had his golden  
hour—

And such a feast, ill-suited as it  
seem'd

To such a time, to Lionel's loss and  
his

And that resolved self-exile from a  
land

He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger even  
than rich, 210

But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the  
hall

Two great funereal curtains, looping  
down,

Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.

And just above the parting was a  
lamp;

So the sweet figure folded round with  
night

Seem'd stepping out of darkness with  
a smile.

Well, then—our solemn feast—we  
ate and drank, 220

And might—the wines being of such  
nobleness—

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about  
it all.

What was it? for our lover seldom  
spoke,

Scarce touch'd the meats, but ever and  
anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless  
wine

Arising show'd he drank beyond his  
use;

And when the feast was near an end,  
he said:

‘There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends—

I read of it in Persia—when a man 230  
Will honor those who feast with him,  
he brings

And shows them whatsoever he ac-  
counts

Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may  
be.

This custom—’

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with  
meeting hands

And cries about the banquet—‘Beau-  
tiful!

Who could desire more beauty at a  
feast?’

The lover answer'd: ‘There is more  
than one

Here sitting who desires it. Laud me  
not 240

Before my time, but hear me to the  
close.

This custom steps yet further when  
the guest

Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.  
For after he hath shown him gems or  
gold,

He brings and sets before him in rich  
guise

That which is thrice as beautiful as  
these,

The beauty that is dearest to his  
heart—

“O my heart's lord, would I could  
show you,” he says,

“Even my heart too.” And I propose  
to-night

To show you what is dearest to my  
heart, 250

And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.  
 I knew a man, nor many years ago;  
 He had a faithful servant, one who  
     loved  
 His master more than all on earth be-  
     side.  
 He falling sick, and seeming close on  
     death,  
 His master would not wait until he  
     died,  
 But bade his menials bear him from  
     the door,  
 And leave him in the public way to  
     die.  
 I knew another, not so long ago,  
 Who found the dying servant, took  
     him home,  
 And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
     his life.  
 I ask you now, should this first master  
     claim  
 His service, whom does it belong to?  
     him  
 Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
     his life?'

This question, so flung down before  
     the guests,  
 And balanced either way by each, at  
     length  
 When some were doubtful how the  
     law would hold,  
 Was handed over by consent of all  
 To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
     phrase.  
 And he, beginning languidly—his loss  
 Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as  
     he went,  
 Glanced at the point of law, to pass it  
     by,  
 Affirming that as long as either lived,  
 By all the laws of love and grateful-  
     ness,  
 The service of the one so saved was  
     due  
 All to the saver—adding, with a smile,  
 The first for many weeks—a semi-  
     smile  
 As at a strong conclusion—'body and  
     soul

| And life and limbs, all his to work  
     his will.' 280

Then Julian made a secret sign to  
     me  
 To bring Camilla down before them  
     all.  
 And crossing her own picture as she  
     came,  
 And looking as much lovelier as her-  
     self  
 Is lovelier than all others—on her  
     head  
 A diamond circlet, and from under  
     this  
 A veil, that seem'd no more than gilded  
     air,  
 Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern  
     gauze  
 With seeds of gold—so, with that  
     grace of hers,  
 Slow-moving as a wave against the  
     wind,  
 That flings a mist behind it in the  
     sun—  
 And bearing high in arms the mighty  
     babe,  
 The younger Julian, who himself was  
     crown'd  
 With roses, none so rosy as himself—  
 And over all her babe and her the  
     jewels  
 Of many generations of his house  
 Sparkled and flash'd, for he had  
     deck'd them out  
 As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
 So she came in—I am long in telling it,  
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—  
     floated in—  
 While all the guests in mute amaze-  
     ment rose—  
 And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
 Before the board, there paused and  
     stood, her breast  
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her  
     feet,  
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
 But him she carried, him nor lights  
     nor feast  
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men;  
     who cared  
 Only to use his own, and staring wide

And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd  
world<sup>310</sup>  
About him, look'd, as he is like to  
prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he  
saw.

'My guests,' said Julian, 'you are  
honor'd now  
Even to the uttermost; in her behold  
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to  
me;'  
Then waving us a sign to seat our-  
selves,  
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble  
too,<sup>321</sup>  
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so  
like;  
She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers—O God,  
so like!'  
And then he suddenly ask'd her if she  
were.  
She shook, and cast her eyes down,  
and was dumb.  
And then some other question'd if she  
came  
From foreign lands, and still she did  
not speak.  
Another, if the boy were hers; but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a  
word,<sup>330</sup>  
Which made the amazement more, till  
one of them  
Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But  
his friend  
Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at  
least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken  
to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd  
all:  
'She is but dumb, because in her you  
see

That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,<sup>339</sup>  
Obedient to her second master now;  
Which will not last. I have here to-  
night a guest  
So bound to me by common love and  
loss—  
What! shall I bind him more? in his  
behalf,  
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest  
to me,  
Not only showing? and he himself pro-  
nounced  
That my rich gift is wholly mine to  
give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all  
of you  
Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my  
heart.'<sup>350</sup>  
And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily—  
The passionate moment would not suf-  
fer that—  
Past thro' his visions to the burial;  
thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his  
own hall;  
And then rose up, and with him all his  
guests  
Once more as by enchantment; all but  
he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell  
again,  
And sat as if in chains—to whom he  
said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for  
your wife;<sup>360</sup>  
And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you  
lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring  
her back.  
I leave this land for ever.' Here he  
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one  
hand,

|                                                       |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| And bearing on one arm the noble<br>babe,             | But Lionel, when at last he freed him-<br>self                                        |
| He slowly brought them both to<br>Lionel.             | From wife and child, and lifted up a<br>face                                          |
| And there the widower husband and<br>dead wife        | All over glowing with the sun of life,<br>And love, and boundless thanks—the          |
| Rush'd each at each with a cry that<br>rather seem'd  | sight of this                                                                         |
| For some new death than for a life<br>renew'd;        | So frighted our good friend that, turn-<br>ing to me                                  |
| Whereat the very babe began to wail.                  | And saying, 'It is over; let us go'—                                                  |
| At once they turn'd, and caught and<br>brought him in | There were our horses ready at the<br>doors—                                          |
| To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-<br>ing him   | We bade them no farewell, but mount-<br>ing these                                     |
| With kisses, round him closed and<br>claspt again.    | He past for ever from his native land;<br>And I with him, my Julian, back to<br>mine. |



## BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

### TO ALFRED TENNYSON

### II

#### MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is  
one with mine,  
Crazy with laughter and babble and  
earth's new wine,  
Now that the flower of a year and a  
half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of  
mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written  
a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of  
my verse is thine.  
Mayst thou never be wrong'd by the  
name that is mine!

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you  
the tale o' my life.  
When Harry an' I were children, he  
call'd me his own little wife; <sup>10</sup>  
I was happy when I was with him, an'  
sorry when he was away,  
An' when we play'd together, I loved  
him better than play;  
He workt me the daisy chain—he  
made me the cowslip ball,  
He fought the boys that were rude,  
an' I loved him better than all.  
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often  
at home in disgrace,  
I never could quarrel with Harry—I  
had but to look in his face.

### THE FIRST QUARREL

#### (IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

### III

'Wait a little,' you say, 'you are sure  
it'll all come right,'  
But the boy was born i' trouble, an'  
looks so wan an' so white;  
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't  
to wait for long.  
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—  
No, no, you are doing me  
wrong!  
Harry and I were married; the boy  
can hold up his head,  
The boy was born in wedlock, but  
after my man was dead;  
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'  
I work an' I wait to the end.  
I am all alone in the world, an' you  
are my only friend.

There was a farmer in Dorset of  
Harry's kin, that had need  
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he  
sent, an' the father agreed;  
So Harry was bound to the Dorset-  
shire farm for years an' for  
years;  
I walk'd with him down to the quay.  
poor lad, an' we parted in  
tears. <sup>20</sup>  
The boat was beginning to move, we  
heard them a-ringing the bell,  
'T'll never love any but you, God bless  
you, my own little Nell.'

### IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'  
he came to harm;  
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt  
with him up at the farm,

One had deceived her an' left her  
alone with her sin an' her  
shame,

And so she was wicked with Harry;  
the girl was the most to blame.

And years went over till I that was  
little had grown so tall  
The men would say of the maids, 'Our  
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'  
I did n't take heed o' *them*, but I  
taught myself all I could  
To make a good wife for Harry, when  
Harry came home for good. <sup>30</sup>

## VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
happy too,  
For I heard it abroad in the fields,  
'I'll never love any but you;'  
'I'll never love any but you,' the morn-  
ing song of the lark;  
'I'll never love any but you,' the night-  
ingale's hymn in the dark.

## VII

And Harry came home at last, but he  
look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so  
many years had gone by,  
I had grown so handsome and tall—  
that I might ha' forgot him  
somehow—  
For he thought—there were other lads  
—he was fear'd to look at me  
now.

## VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we  
were married o' Christmas day,  
Married among the red berries, an' all  
as merry as May— <sup>40</sup>  
Those were the pleasant times, my  
house an' my man were my  
pride,  
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel  
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

## IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he  
tried the villages round,  
So Harry went over the Solent to see  
if work could be found;  
An' he wrote: 'I ha' six weeks' work,  
little wife, so far as I know;  
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'  
kiss you before I go.'

So I set to righting the house, for  
wasn't he coming that day?  
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
push'd in a corner away,  
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
letter along wi' the rest,  
I had better ha' put my naked hand in  
a hornets' nest. <sup>50</sup>

## XI

'Sweetheart,'—this was the letter—  
this was the letter I read—  
'You promised to find me work near  
you, an' I wish I was dead—  
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
haven't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away,  
an' I wish that I had.'

## XII

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant  
times that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry—*my*  
quarrel—the first an' the last.

## XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the  
letter that drove me wild,  
An' he told it me all at once, as simple  
as any child,  
'What can it matter, my lass, what I  
did wi' my single life?  
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man  
to his wife; <sup>60</sup>  
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.'  
'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the  
best.'

An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said, 'You were keeping with her,

When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'

An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*—in her shame an' her sin—

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in! <sup>70</sup>

You'll make her its second mother! I hate her—an' I hate you!

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue

Then ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right.'

## XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard; he was all wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said, 'off wi' the wet,' I never said, 'on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me good-bye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before I go?' <sup>80</sup>

## xv

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her—if you will,' I said—

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head—

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'—I didn't know well what I meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

## XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do;

You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

## XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me. <sup>90</sup>

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right'—

An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me!'

Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,

And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was  
there left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have num-  
ber'd the bones, I have hidden<sup>10</sup>  
them all.

What am I saying? and what are *you*?  
do you come as a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the  
tree falls so must it lie.

## IV

Who let her in? how long has she  
been? you—what have you  
heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? you never  
have spoken a word.

O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—  
none of their spies—

But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,

The blast and the burning shame and  
the bitter frost and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep  
—you were only made for the  
day.

I have gather'd my baby together—  
and now you may go your<sup>20</sup>  
way.

## VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to  
sit by an old dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I  
have only an hour of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before  
he went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and  
he never has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard  
once when he was but a child—

'The farmer dared me to do it,' he  
said; he was always so wild—

And idle—and couldn't be idle—my  
Willy—he never could rest.

The King should have made him a  
soldier, he would have been one  
of his best.

## VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,  
and they never would let him  
be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the  
mail, and he swore that he<sup>30</sup>  
would;

And he took no life, but he took one  
purse, and when all was done

He flung it among his fellows—'I'll  
none of it,' said my son.

## VIII

I came into court to the judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale,  
God's own truth—but they kill'd him,  
they kill'd him for robbing the  
mail.

They hang'd him in chains for a show  
—we had always borne a good  
name—

To be hang'd for a thief—and then  
put away—isn't that enough  
shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide!  
but they set him so high

That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.

God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven  
and horrible fowls of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer  
who kill'd him and hang'd him<sup>40</sup>  
there.

## IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had  
bid him my last good-bye;

They had fasten'd the door of his cell  
'O mother!' I heard him cry.

I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,

And now I never shall know it. The  
jailer forced me away.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry  
of my boy that was dead,

They seized me and shut me up: they  
 fasten'd me down on my bed.  
 'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the  
 dark to me year after year—  
 They beat me for that, they beat me—  
 you know that I couldn't but  
 hear;  
 And then at the last they found I had  
 grown so stupid and still  
 They let me abroad again—but the  
 creatures had worked their  
 will. 50

## XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone  
 of my bone was left—  
 I stole them all from the lawyers—and  
 you, will you call it a theft?—  
 My baby, the bones that had suck'd  
 me, the bones that had laughed  
 and had cried—  
 Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not  
 theirs—they had moved in my  
 side.

## XII

Do you think I was scared by the  
 bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried  
 'em all—  
 I can't dig deep, I am old—in the  
 night by the churchyard wall.  
 My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
 trumpet of judgment 'ill  
 sound,  
 But I charge you never to say that I  
 laid him in holy ground.

## XIII

They would scratch him up—they  
 would hang him again on the  
 cursed tree.  
 Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—  
 let all that be, 60  
 And read me a Bible verse of the  
 Lord's goodwill toward men—  
 'Full of compassion and mercy, the  
 Lord'—let me hear it again;  
 'Full of compassion and mercy—long-  
 suffering.' Yes. O, yes!

For the lawyer is born but to murder  
 —the Saviour lives but to  
 bless.

*He* 'll never put on the black cap ex-  
 cept for the worst of the worst,  
 And the first may be last—I have  
 heard it in church—and the last  
 may be first.

Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as  
 the Lord must know,

Year after year in the mist and the  
 wind and the shower and the  
 snow.

## XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have  
 told you he never repented his  
 sin.

How do they know it? are *they* his  
 mother? are *you* of his kin? 70

Heard! have you ever heard, when  
 the storm on the downs began.  
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and  
 the sea that 'ill moan like a  
 man?

## XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation—  
 it's all very well.

But I go to-night to my boy, and I  
 shall not find him in hell.

For I cared so much for my boy that  
 the Lord as look'd into my  
 care,

And He means me I'm sure to be  
 happy with Willy, I know not  
 where.

## XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul,  
 that is all your desire—

Do you think that I care for *my* soul  
 if my boy be gone to the fire?

I have been with God in the dark—  
 go, go, you may leave me  
 alone—

You never have borne a child—you  
 are just as hard as a stone. 80

## XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
 that you mean to be kind,  
 But I cannot hear what you say for  
 my Willy's voice in the wind—  
 The snow and the sky so bright—he  
 used but to call in the dark,  
 And he calls to me now from the  
 church and not from the gibbet  
 —for hark!  
 Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is  
 coming—shaking the walls—  
 Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-  
 night. I am going. He calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

WÄÄRT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou  
 mun a' sights <sup>1</sup> to tell.  
 Eh, but I be maän glad to seeä tha sa'  
 'arty an' well.  
 'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a  
 vartical soon <sup>2</sup>!  
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what  
 saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;  
 'Summat to drink—sa 'ot?' I 'a nowt  
 but Adam's wine:  
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to  
 the 'eät o' the line?

## II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?'  
 I'll tell tha. Gin.  
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun  
 goä fur it down to the inn.  
 Naäy—fur I be maän-glad, but thaw  
 tha was iver sa dry,

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *äi*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craäin*, *daäin*, *whäi*, *äi* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer,  
 an' I'll tell tha why. 10

## III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when  
 wur it? back-end o' June,  
 Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as  
 a fiddle i' tune.  
 I could fettle and chump owd booöts  
 and shoes wi' the best on 'em  
 all,  
 As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
 Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.  
 We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an'  
 as 'appy as 'art could think,  
 An' then the babby wur burn, and then  
 I taäkes to the drink.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw  
 I be hafe shaämed on it now,  
 We could sing a good song at the Plow,  
 we could sing a good song at  
 the Plow;  
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd  
 an' hurted my huck,<sup>1</sup>  
 An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes  
 slaäpe down i' the squad an'  
 the muck: 20  
 An' once I fowt wi' the taäilör—not  
 hafe ov a man, my lad—  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my faäce  
 like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa  
 mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-  
 banger,<sup>2</sup> an' raäted ma, 'Sot-  
 tin' thy braäins  
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'  
 hawmin' <sup>3</sup> about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn't  
 touch thy 'at to the Squire;  
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse  
 an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hal-  
 lus as droonk as a king,  
 Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a  
 kite wi' a brokken string.

<sup>1</sup> Hip.

<sup>3</sup> Lounging.

<sup>2</sup> Scold.

An' Sally she wesh'd föälsks' cloäths to  
 keep the wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh, but the moor she riled me, she  
 druv me to drink the moor, <sup>30</sup>  
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
 wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur  
 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd ðe munny she maäde,  
 and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

## VI

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull  
 gotten loose at a faäir,  
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'  
 cryin' and teärin' 'er aäir,  
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'  
 sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick  
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied  
 our Sally a kick,  
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,  
 an' she an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>1</sup>  
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor  
 a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

## VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I  
 seeäd that our Sally went laämed  
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur  
 dreädful ashaämed; <sup>40</sup>  
 An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>2</sup> an' draggle-  
 taäil'd in an owd turn gown,  
 An' the babby's faäce wurm't wesh'd,  
 an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

## VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty  
 an' neät an' sweet,  
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower  
 fro' 'eäd to feät:  
 An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied  
 'er by Thursday thurn;  
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a  
 Sunday at murn,  
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im  
 a-mountin' oop 'igher an'  
 'igher,

<sup>1</sup> Bellowed, cried out.

<sup>2</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
 shined like a sparkle o' fire.  
 'Doesn't tha see 'im?' she axes, 'fur I  
 can see 'im;' an' I <sup>49</sup>  
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
 An' I says, 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an'  
 Sally says, 'Noä, thou moänt,'  
 But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
 an' Sally says, 'doänt!'

## IX

An' when we coom'd into meeätin', at  
 fust she wur all in a tew,  
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither  
 like birds on a beugh;  
 An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' hell-fire an'  
 the loov o' God fur men,  
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally  
 gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like  
 Saätan as fell  
 Down out o' heaven i' hell-fire—thaw  
 theer's naw drinkin' i' hell;  
 Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the  
 wolf fro' the door,  
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
 as well as afoor. <sup>60</sup>

## XI

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blub  
 ber'd awaäy o' the bed—  
 'Weänt niver do it naw moor;' an'  
 Sally looökt up an' she said,  
 'I'll upowd it<sup>1</sup> tha weänt; thou 'rt  
 like the rest o' the men,  
 Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till  
 tha does it ageän.  
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I  
 knaws, as knaws tha sa well,  
 That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im  
 tha 'll foller 'im slick into hell.'

## XII

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin'  
 about the tap.'

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.

'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I  
 thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'  
 'Noä:' an' I started awaäy like a shot,  
 an' down to the hinn,  
 An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin'  
 theer, yon big black bottle o'  
 gin. 70

## XIII

'That caps owt,'<sup>1</sup> says Sally, an' saw  
 she begins to cry,  
 But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says  
 to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,  
 'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the  
 Lord an' the power ov 'is  
 graäce,  
 Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hen-  
 nemy straäit i' the faäce,  
 Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let  
 ma looök at 'im then,  
 'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an'  
 'e 's the devil's oän sen.'

## XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't  
 do naw work an' all,  
 Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'  
 poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,  
 But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
 sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
 An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till  
 ageän I feel'd mysen free. 80

## XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk  
 stood a-gawmin'<sup>2</sup> in,  
 As thaw it wur summatt bewitch'd  
 istead of a quart o' gin;  
 An' some on 'em said it wur watter-  
 an' I wur chousin' the wife,  
 Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur  
 it nobbut to sääve my life;  
 An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick  
 ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to  
 me,  
 Feäl thou this! thou can't graw this  
 upo' watter!' says he.

<sup>1</sup> That 's beyond everything.

<sup>2</sup> Staring vacantly.

An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just  
 as candles was lit,  
 'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun  
 breäk 'im off bit by bit.'  
 'Thou 'rt but a Methody-man,' says  
 Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,  
 An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I  
 respects tha fur that;' 90  
 An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks  
 down fro' the 'All to see,  
 An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I  
 respects tha,' says 'e;  
 An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a  
 wind fro' far an' wide,  
 And browt me the booöts to be cob-  
 bled fro' hafe the coontryside.

## XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall  
 stan' to my dying daäy;  
 I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in an-  
 oother kind of a waäy,  
 Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I  
 keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,  
 Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts  
 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the  
 light.

## XVII

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a  
 quart? Naw doubt;  
 But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'  
 an' fowt it out. 100  
 Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I  
 cared to taäste,  
 But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur  
 I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-  
 graäced.

## XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My  
 lass, when I cooms to die,  
 Smash the bottle to smithers, the  
 devil's in 'im,' said I.  
 But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if  
 Sally be left aloän,  
 I'll hev 'im a-buried wi' mma an' taäke  
 'im afoor the Throän.



## XIX

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin'  
 along the streeät,  
 Doesn't tha knaw 'er—sa pratty, an'  
 feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?  
 Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe  
 ammost spick-span-new,  
 An' Tommy's faäce-be as fresh as a  
 codlin wesh'd i' the dew. 110

## XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we  
 be a-goin to dine,  
 Bäacon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-  
 din'<sup>1</sup> an' Adam's wine;  
 But if tha wants ony grog tha mun  
 goä fur it down to the Hinn,  
 Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,  
 noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

## THE REVENGE

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

Ar Flores in the Azores Sir Richard  
 Grenville lay,  
 And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird,  
 came flying from far away:  
 'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have  
 sighted fifty-three!'  
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:  
 'Fore God I am no coward;  
 But I cannot meet them here, for my  
 ships are out of gear,  
 And the half my men are sick. I must  
 fly, but follow quick.  
 We are six ships of the line; can we  
 fight with fifty-three?'

## II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I  
 know you are no coward;  
 You fly them for a moment to fight  
 with them again.

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of  
 the cow after calving.

But I've ninety men and more that are  
 lying sick ashore. 10  
 I should count myself the coward if I  
 left them, my Lord Howard,  
 To these Inquisition dogs and the  
 devildoms of Spain.'

## III

So Lord Howard past away with five  
 ships of war that day,  
 Till he melted like a cloud in the  
 silent summer heaven;  
 But Sir Richard bore in hand all his  
 sick men from the land  
 Very carefully and slow,  
 Men of Bideford in Devon,  
 And we laid them on the ballast down  
 below;  
 For we brought them all aboard,  
 And they blest him in their pain, that  
 they were not left to Spain, 20  
 To the thumb-screw and the stake, for  
 the glory of the Lord.

## IV

He had only a hundred seamen to  
 work the ship and to fight,  
 And he sailed away from Flores till  
 the Spaniard came in sight,  
 With his huge sea-castles heaving upon  
 the weather bow.  
 'Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
 Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
 For to fight is but to die!  
 There'll be little of us left by the time  
 this sun be set.'  
 And Sir Richard said again: 'We be  
 all good English men.  
 Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the  
 children of the devil, 30  
 For I never turn'd my back upon Don  
 or devil yet.'

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
 we roar'd a hurrah, and so  
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into  
 the heart of the foe,  
 With her hundred fighters on deck,  
 and her ninety sick below;

For half of their fleet to the right and  
half to the left were seen,  
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the  
long sea-lane between.

## VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd  
down from their decks and  
laugh'd,  
Thousands of their seamen made mock  
at the mad little craft  
Running on and on, till delay'd  
By their mountain-like San Philip  
that, of fifteen hundred tons, <sup>40</sup>  
And up-shadowing high above us with  
her yawning tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and  
we stay'd.

## VII

And while now the great San Philip  
hung above us like a cloud  
Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,  
Four galleons drew away  
From the Spanish fleet that day,  
And two upon the larboard and two  
upon the starboard lay,  
And the battle-thunder broke from  
them all.

## VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she be-  
thought herself and went, <sup>50</sup>  
Having that within her womb that had  
left her ill content;  
And the rest they came aboard us, and  
they fought us hand to hand,  
For a dozen times they came with  
their pikes and musqueteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as  
a dog that shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the  
land.

## IX

And the sun went down, and the stars  
came out far over the summer  
sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight  
of the one and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
their high-built galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
with her battle-thunder and  
flame;

Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
drew back with her dead and  
her shame. <sup>60</sup>

For some were sunk and many were  
shatter'd, and so could fight us  
no more—

God of battles, was ever a battle like  
this in the world before?

## X

For he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;  
And it chanced that, when half of the  
short summer night was gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he had  
left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was  
dressing it suddenly dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in  
the side and the head,  
And he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'

## XI

And the night went down, and the sun  
smiled out far over the summer  
sea, <sup>70</sup>

And the Spanish fleet with broken  
sides lay round us all in a ring;  
But they dared not touch us again,  
for they fear'd that we still  
could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would  
be.

And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
slain,

And half of the rest of us maim'd for  
life

In the crash of the cannonades and  
the desperate strife;

And the sick men down in the hold  
were most of them stark and  
cold,

And the pikes were all broken or  
 bent, and the powder was all  
 of it spent; <sup>80</sup>  
 And the masts and the rigging were  
 lying over the side;  
 But Sir Richard cried in his English  
 pride:  
 'We have fought such a fight for a  
 day and a night  
 As may never be fought again!  
 We have won great glory, my men!  
 And a day less or more  
 At sea or ashore,  
 We die—does it matter when?  
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—  
 sink her, split her in twain!  
 Fall into the hands of God, not into  
 the hands of Spain!' <sup>90</sup>

## XII

And the gunner said, 'Ay, ay,' but the  
 seamen made reply:  
 'We have children, we have wives,  
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
 We will make the Spaniard promise,  
 if we yield, to let us go;  
 We shall live to fight again and to  
 strike another blow.'  
 And the lion there lay dying, and they  
 yielded to the foe.

## XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their  
 flagship bore him then,  
 Where they laid him by the mast, old  
 Sir Richard caught at last,  
 And they praised him to his face with  
 their courtly foreign grace;  
 But he rose upon their decks, and he  
 cried: <sup>100</sup>  
 'I have fought for Queen and Faith  
 like a valiant man and true;  
 I have only done my duty as a man is  
 bound to do.  
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard  
 Grenville die!  
 And he fell upon their decks, and he  
 died.

## XIV

And they stared at the dead that had  
 been so valiant and true,  
 And had holden the power and glory  
 of Spain so cheap  
 That he dared her with one little ship  
 and his English few;  
 Was he devil or man? He was devil  
 for aught they knew,  
 But they sank his body with honor  
 down into the deep,  
 And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
 swarthier alien crew, <sup>110</sup>  
 And away she sail'd with her loss and  
 long'd for her own;  
 When a wind from the lands they had  
 ruin'd awoke from sleep,  
 And the water began to heave and the  
 weather to moan,  
 And or ever that evening ended a great  
 gale blew,  
 And a wave like the wave that is  
 raised by an earthquake grew,  
 Till it smote on their hulls and their  
 sails and their masts and their  
 flags,  
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
 the shot-shatter'd navy of  
 Spain,  
 And the little Revenge herself went  
 down by the island crags  
 To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by  
 their clash,  
 And prelude on the keys, I know the  
 song,  
 Their favorite—which I call 'The  
 Tables Turn'd.'  
 Evelyn begins it, 'O diviner Air.'

## EVELYN

O diviner Air,  
 Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,  
 the glare,  
 Far from out the west in shadowing  
 showers,  
 Over all the meadow baked and bare,

Making fresh and fair  
 All the bowers and the flowers,  
 Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
 Over all this weary world of ours,  
 Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that—you scarce could  
 better that!  
 Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH

O diviner light,  
 Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon  
 with night,  
 Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
 showers,  
 Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
 Over all the woodland's flooded  
 bowers,  
 Over all the meadow's drowning  
 flowers,  
 Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
 Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and  
 themselves!  
 Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
 other,  
 As one is somewhat graver than the  
 other—  
 Edith than Evelyn. Your good uncle,  
 whom  
 You count the father of your for-  
 tune, longs  
 For this alliance. Let me ask you then,  
 Which voice most takes you? for I do  
 not doubt,  
 Being a watchful parent, you are  
 taken  
 With one or other; tho' sometimes I  
 fear  
 You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
 doubt  
 Between the two—which must not be  
 —which might  
 Be death to one. They both are beau-  
 tiful;  
 Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
 The common voice, if one may trust  
 it, she?  
 No! but the paler and the graver,  
 Edith.  
 Woo her and gain her then; no waver-  
 ing, boy!

The graver is perhaps the one for  
 you  
 Who jest and laugh so easily and so  
 well.  
 For love will go by contrast, as by  
 likes.

No sisters ever prized each other  
 more.  
 Not so; their mother and her sister  
 loved  
 More passionately still.  
 But that my best  
 And oldest friend, your uncle, wishes  
 it,  
 And that I know you worthy every  
 way  
 To be my son, I might, perchance, be  
 loath  
 To part them, or part from them; and  
 yet one  
 Should marry, or all the broad lands  
 in your view  
 From this bay-window—which our  
 house has held  
 Three hundred years—will pass col-  
 laterally.

My father with a child on either  
 knee,  
 A hand upon the head of either child,  
 Smoothing their locks, as golden as  
 his own  
 Were silver, 'get them wedded' would  
 he say.  
 And once my prattling Edith ask'd  
 him 'why?'  
 'Ay, why?' said he, 'for why should I  
 go lame?'  
 Then told them of his wars, and of his  
 wound.  
 For see—this wine—the grape from  
 whence it flow'd  
 Was blackening on the slopes of Por-  
 tugal,  
 When that brave soldier, down the  
 terrible ridge  
 Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
 Waterloo,  
 And caught the laming bullet. He left  
 me this,  
 Which yet retains a memory of its  
 youth,

## THE SISTERS

As I of mine, and my first passion.  
Come!  
Here's to your happy union with my  
child!

Yet must you change your name—  
no fault of mine!  
You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-  
time 70

By change of feather; for all that, my  
boy,  
Some birds are sick and sullen when  
they moult.  
An old and worthy name! but mine  
that stirr'd  
Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
I care not for a name—no fault of  
mine.  
Once more—a happier marriage than  
my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
plain.  
The highway running by it leaves a  
breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where, long  
ago, 80  
One bright May morning in a world  
of song,  
I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The aerial poplar wave, an amber  
spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past  
me, show'd  
Turning my way, the loveliest face on  
earth.  
The face of one there sitting oppo-  
site,  
On whom I brought a strange unhap-  
piness,  
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight

May seem—with goodly rhyme and  
reason for it— 90  
Possible—at first glimpse, and for a  
face  
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet  
once, when first

I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm—one  
lightning-fork  
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loi-  
ter'd there  
The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-  
sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the  
day.

The sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me.  
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as  
well. 100  
For look you here—the shadows are  
too deep,  
And like the critic's blurring comment  
make  
The veriest beauties of the work ap-  
pear  
The darkest faults; the sweet eyes  
frown, the lips  
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith—no, the other,—both in-  
deed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro  
sense and soul  
And by the poplar vanish'd—to be  
found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the  
tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechen boughs 110  
Of our New Forest. I was there alone.  
The phantom of the whirling landau-  
let  
For ever past me by; when one quick  
peal  
Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-  
mering glades  
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a  
cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face  
again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—  
all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
happiness,  
And moved to merriment at a passing  
jest.

There one of those about her know-  
 ing me <sup>120</sup>  
 Call'd me to join them; so with these  
 I spent  
 What seem'd my crowning hour, my  
 day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsucces-  
 fully,  
 The worse for her, for me! Was I con-  
 tent?  
 Ay—no, not quite; for now and then  
 I thought  
 Laziness, vague love-longings, the  
 bright May,  
 Had made a heated haze to magnify  
 The charm of Edith—that a man's  
 ideal  
 Is high in heaven, and lodged with  
 Plato's God,  
 Not findable here—content, and not  
 content, <sup>130</sup>  
 In some such fashion as a man may be  
 That having had the portrait of his  
 friend  
 Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and  
 says,  
 'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by  
 words,  
 Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
 Edith love *me*. Then came the day  
 when I,  
 Flattering myself that all my doubts  
 were fools  
 Born of the fool this Age that doubts  
 of all—  
 Not I that day of Edith's love or  
 mine— <sup>140</sup>  
 Had braced my purpose to declare  
 myself.  
 I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
 The golden gates would open at a  
 word.  
 I spoke it—told her of my passion,  
 seen  
 And lost and found again, had got so  
 far,  
 Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell  
 —I heard  
 Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
 doors—

On a sudden after two Italian years  
 Had set the blossom of her health  
 again,  
 The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—  
 there, <sup>150</sup>  
 There was the face, and altogether  
 she.  
 The mother fell about the daughter's  
 neck,  
 The sisters closed in one another's  
 arms,  
 Their people throng'd about them  
 from the hall,  
 And in the thick of question and reply  
 I fled the house, driven by one angel  
 face,  
 And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;  
 I could not free myself in honor—  
 bound  
 Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
 But counter-pressures of the yielded  
 hand <sup>160</sup>  
 That timorously and faintly echoed  
 mine,  
 Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of  
 her eyes  
 Upon me when she thought I did not  
 see—  
 Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but  
 could I wed her  
 Loving the other? do her that great  
 wrong?  
 Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
 morn?  
 Had I not known where Love, at first  
 a fear,  
 Grew after marriage to full height and  
 form?  
 Yet after marriage, that mock-sister  
 there—  
 Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of  
 it— <sup>170</sup>  
 Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—  
 What end but darkness could ensue  
 from this  
 For all the three? So Love and Honor  
 jarr'd,  
 Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise  
 the full  
 High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up  
 and down

Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:  
'My mother bids me ask'—I did not  
tell you—

A widow with less guile than many a  
child.

God help the wrinkled children that  
are Christ's

As well as the plump cheek—she  
wrought us harm, <sup>189</sup>

Poor soul, not knowing!—'Are you  
ill?'—so ran

The letter—'you have not been here  
of late.

You will not find me here. At last I go  
On that long-promised visit to the  
North.

I told your wayside story to my  
mother

And Evelyn. She remembers you.  
Farewell.

Pray come and see my mother. Almost  
blind

With ever-growing cataract, yet she  
thinks

She sees you when she hears. Again  
farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped  
to warm so far <sup>190</sup>

That I could stamp my image on her  
heart!

'Pray come and see my mother, and  
farewell.'

Cold, but as welcome as free airs of  
heaven

After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
strange!

What dwarfs are men! my strangled  
vanity

Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vexed  
myself

And all in vain for her—cold heart or  
none—

No bride for me. Yet so my path was  
clear

To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former  
suit, <sup>200</sup>

Because the simple mother work'd  
upon

By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of  
it.

And Edith would be bridesmaid on the  
day.

But on that day, not being all at  
ease,

I from the altar glancing back upon  
her,

Before the first 'I will' was utter'd,  
saw

The bridesmaid pale, statue-like, pas-  
sionless—

'No harm, no harm'—I turn'd again,  
and placed

My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no  
word, <sup>210</sup>

She wept no tear, but round my Eve-  
lyn clung

In utter silence for so long, I thought,  
'What, will she never set her sister  
free?'

We left her, happy each in each,  
and then,

As tho' the happiness of each in each  
Were not enough, must fain have tor-  
rents, lakes,

Hills, the great things of Nature and  
the fair,

To lift us as it were from common-  
place,

And help us to our joy. Better have  
sent

Our Edith thro' the glories of the  
earth, <sup>220</sup>

To change with her horizon, if true  
Love

Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would  
not live

Save that I think this gross hard-seem-  
ing world

Is our misshaping vision of the Pow-  
ers

Behind the world, that make our  
griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day  
 The great tragedian, that had quenched herself  
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid—she  
 That loved me—our true Edith—her brain broke <sup>230</sup>  
 With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
 Beneath a pitiless rush of autumn rain  
 To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray  
 Before *that* altar—so I think; and there  
 They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.  
 She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once  
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd  
 The morning of our marriage, past away.  
 And on our home-return the daily want <sup>240</sup>  
 Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,  
 Either from that necessity for talk  
 Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence  
 Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
 Should earn from both the praise of heroism,  
 The mother broke her promise to the dead,  
 And told the living daughter with what love  
 Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of her,  
 And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death. <sup>250</sup>

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the twins—  
 Did I not tell you they were twins?—prevail'd

So far that no caress could win my wife  
 Back to that passionate answer of full heart  
 I had from her at first. Not that her love,  
 Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,  
 Had lessen'd but the mother's garrulous wail  
 For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
 Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my bride,  
 Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd <sup>260</sup>  
 The very fountains of her life were chill'd;  
 So took her thence, and brought her here, and here  
 She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd  
 Edith; and in the second year was born  
 A second—this I named from her own self,  
 Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she join'd,  
 In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
 Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,  
 The sisters glide about me hand in hand, <sup>270</sup>  
 Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
 One from the other, no, nor care to tell  
 One from the other, only know they come,  
 They smile upon me, till, remembering all  
 The love they both have borne me, and the love  
 I bore them both—divided as I am  
 From either by the stillness of the grave—  
 I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true eyes



Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—<sup>280</sup>

The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,

And not without good reason, my good son—

Is yet untouch'd. And I that hold them both

Dearest of all things—well, I am not sure—

But if there lie a preference either way,

And in the rich vocabulary of Love 'Most dearest' be a true superlative—

I think I likewise love your Edith most.

### THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL<sup>1</sup>

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha, my lass, fur new Squire coom'd last night.

Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä wi' tha back; all right;

Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs be as well,

Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the shell.

#### II

Sit thysen down fur a bit; hev a glass o' cowslip wine!

I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was gells o' mine,

Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me,

Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took to she.

But Nelly, the last of the cletch,<sup>2</sup> I liked 'er the fust on 'em all,

Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall; <sup>10</sup>

An' I thowt 't wur the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said it wur draäins,

Fur she hed n't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.

<sup>1</sup> See note on pronunciation, p. 762.

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord, my childer, I han't gotten none!

Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone.

#### III

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass—tha dosn' know what that be?

But I knows the law, I does, for the lawyer ha tow'd it me.

'When theer 's naw 'eä'd to a 'Ouse by the fault o' that ere maäle—

The gells they counts fur nowt, and the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

#### IV

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony harm on 'im, lass?—

Naäy sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowl! —hev another glass! <sup>20</sup>

Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may happen a fall o' snaw—

Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but I likes to know.

An' I oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd; but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere;

We 'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we haätes booöklarnin' ere.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt arter the land—

Whoäts or turmuts or taätes—'e 'd hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,

Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo' seventy year.

An' booöks, what 's booöks? thou knows thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer.

#### VI

An' the gells, they hed n't naw taäils, an' the lawyer he tow'd it me

That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he could n't cut down a tree! <sup>30</sup>

'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em, my lass,

Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an'  
they sucks the muck fro' the  
grass.

An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks,  
an' booöks, as thou knaws,  
beänt nowt.

## VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'  
gied to the tramps goin' by—  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi'  
hoffens a drop in 'is eye.  
An' ivry darter o' Squire 's hed her  
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their  
grooms, an' wus 'untin' arter  
the men,  
An' hallus a-dallackt <sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out,  
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,  
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-  
gowk <sup>2</sup> wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is  
noäse,  
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it  
could n't be scroob'd awaäy,  
Fur 'atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e  
sniffit up a box in a daäy, <sup>40</sup>  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e  
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,  
but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,  
Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'  
'e did n't take kind to it like;  
But I 'eärs es 'e 'd gie fur a howry <sup>3</sup>  
owd book thutty pound an'  
moor,  
An' 'e 'd wrote an' owd book, his awn  
sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e 'd coom  
to be poor;  
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha  
'ow much—fur an owd scrat-  
ted stoän,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an'  
'e got a brown pot an' a boän,  
An' 'e bowt owd money, es would n't  
goä, wi' good gowd o' the  
Queen,  
An' 'e bowt little statutes all naäkt an'  
which was a shaäme to be  
seen; <sup>50</sup>

But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e  
niver not seed to owt,

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colors.

<sup>2</sup> Owl.

<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

## VIII

But owd Squire's läädy es long es she  
lived she kep' 'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed  
none of 'er darters 'ere;  
But arter she died we was all es one,  
the childer an' me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' of-  
fens we hed 'em to tea.  
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses  
'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,  
An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses.—  
I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.  
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck  
oop, like 'er mother afoor—  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver  
derken'd my door. <sup>60</sup>

## IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till  
'e 'd gotten a fright at last,  
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they foller'd sa fast;  
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e  
says to 'im, meek as a mouse,  
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the  
gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I  
oäps es thou 'll 'elp me a bit,  
An' if thou 'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil  
I may saäve mysen yit.'

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im, 'Noä.  
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an'  
be dang'd if I iver let goä!  
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why  
shouldn't thy booöks be sowd!  
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe  
worth their weight i' gowd.' <sup>70</sup>

## XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' seed  
'em, belong'd to the Squire.

But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i'  
     the middle to kindle the fire;  
 Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd  
     nigh to nowt at the saäle,  
 And Squire were at Charlie ageän to  
     git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

## XII

Ya would n't find Charlie's likes—'e  
     were that outdacious at 'oäm,  
 Not thaw ye went fur to raäke out hell  
     wi' a small-tooth coämb—  
 Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'  
     droonk wi' the farmer's aäle,  
 Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e  
     would n't cut off the taäil.

## XIII

Thou 's coom'd oop by the beck; and  
     a thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the maäy  
     es I seed it to-year—<sup>80</sup>  
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it  
     gied me a scare tother night,  
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'  
     the derk, fur it looökt sa white.  
 'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!—thaw  
     the banks o' the beck be sa  
     high,  
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,  
     thaw niver a hair wur awry;  
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
     Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e  
     lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

## XIV

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur  
     gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,  
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but  
     'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eäd.  
 Hallus a soft un, Squire! an' 'e smiled,  
     fur 'e hed n't naw friend,  
 Sa feyther an' son was buried togher,  
     an' this wur the hend.<sup>90</sup>

## XV

An' Parson as hes n't the call, nor the  
     mooney, but hes the pride,

'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp 'o'  
     the tother side;  
 But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,  
     howsiver they praäy'd an'  
     praäy'd,  
 Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves  
     their debts to be paäid.  
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'  
     poor owd Squire i' the wood,  
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they  
     weänt niver coom to naw good.

## XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt  
     awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,  
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin', sa o'  
     coorse she be gone to the bad!  
 An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-  
     'arts she niver 'ed none—  
 Straänge an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy!  
     we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw<sup>100</sup>  
     one!  
 An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics,  
     wi'out ony harm i' the legs,  
 An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd  
     as bald as one o' them heggs,  
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as  
     big i' the mouth as a cow,  
 An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>2</sup> lass,  
     or she weänt git a maäte ony-  
     how!  
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me  
     afoor my awn foälsks to my  
     faäce,  
 'A hignorant village wife es 'ud hev to  
     be larn'd her awn plaäce,'  
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes  
     now be a-grawin' sa howd,  
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt  
     not fit to be towld!

## XVII

Sa I did n't not taäke it kindly ov owd  
     Miss Annie to saäy  
 Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es  
     soon es they went awaäy,<sup>110</sup>  
 Fur lawks! 'ow I cried when they  
     went, an' our Nelly she gied me  
     'er 'and,

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.

<sup>2</sup> Emigrate.

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an'  
 'is gells es belong'd to the land;  
 Booöks es I said afor, thebbe neyther  
 'ere nor theer!  
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs  
 fur huppuds o' twenty year.

## XVIII

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa  
 I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'  
 they knaw'd what a hegg wur,  
 an' all;  
 Hugger-mugger they lived, but they  
 was n't that eäsy to pleäse,  
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they  
 laäid big heggs es tha seeäs;  
 An' I niver puts saäme <sup>1</sup> i' my butter  
 —they does it at Willis's farm;  
 Taäste another drop o' the wine—  
 tweänt do tha naw harm. 120

## XIX

Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in  
 'is 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone;  
 I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter  
 my night-cap wur on;  
 Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he  
 coom'd last night sa laäte—  
 Pluksh!!! <sup>2</sup> the hens i' the peäs! why  
 didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL

## EMMIE

'It should be remembered that this is a  
 little drama, in which the Hospital Nurse,  
 not the Poet, is supposed to be speaking  
 throughout' (Palgrave).

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I  
 never had seen him before,  
 But he sent a chill to my heart when  
 I saw him come in at the door,

<sup>1</sup> Lard.

<sup>2</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of  
 hands to scare trespassing fowl.

Fresh from the surgery-schools of  
 France and of other lands—  
 Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,  
 big merciless hands!  
 Wonderful cures he had done, O, yes,  
 but they said too of him  
 He was happier using the knife than  
 in trying to save the limb,  
 And that I can well believe, for he  
 look'd so coarse and so red,  
 I could think he was one of those who  
 would break their jests on the  
 dead,  
 And mangle the living dog that had  
 loved him and fawn'd at his  
 knee—  
 Drench'd with the hellish ooralì—  
 that ever such things should  
 be!

## II

Here was a boy—I am sure that some  
 of our children would die  
 But for the voice of love, and the  
 smile, and the comforting  
 eye—  
 Here was a boy in the ward, every  
 bone seem'd out of its place—  
 Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was  
 all but a hopeless case;  
 And he handled him gently enough:  
 but his voice and his face were  
 not kind,  
 And it was but a hopeless case, he had  
 seen it and made up his mind,  
 And he said to me roughly, 'The lad  
 will need little more of your  
 care.'  
 'All the more need,' I told him, 'to  
 seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;  
 They are all His children here, and I  
 pray for them all as my own.'  
 But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good  
 woman, can prayer set a  
 broken bone?'  
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but  
 I know that I heard him say,  
 'All very well—but the good Lord  
 Jesus has had his day.'

## III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd.  
 It will come by and by.  
 O, how could I serve in the wards if  
 the hope of the world were a  
 lie?  
 How could I bear with the sights and  
 the loathsome smells of disease  
 But that He said, 'Ye do it to me,  
 when ye do it to these?'

## IV

So he went. And we past to this ward  
 where the younger children are  
 laid.  
 Here is the cot of our orphan, our  
 darling, our meek little maid;  
 Empty, you see, just now! We have  
 lost her who loved her so  
 much—  
 Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-  
 sitive plant to the touch.  
 Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
 moved me to tears,  
 Hers was the gratefulest heart I have  
 found in a child of her years—  
 Nay you remember our Emmie; you  
 used to send her the flowers.  
 How she would smile at 'em, play with  
 'em, talk to 'em hours after  
 hours!  
 They that can wander at will where  
 the works of the Lord are re-  
 veal'd  
 Little guess what joy can be got from  
 a cowslip out of the field;  
 Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are  
 all they can know of the spring,  
 They freshen and sweeten the wards  
 like the waft of an angel's  
 wing.  
 And she lay with a flower in one hand  
 and her thin hands crost on her  
 breast—  
 Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-  
 sire, and we thought her at rest,  
 Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor  
 said, 'Poor little dear,  
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she 'll  
 never live thro' it, I fear.'

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
 far as the head of the stair,  
 Then I return'd to the ward; the child  
 did n't see I was there.

## VI

Never since I was nurse had I been so  
 grieved and so vexed!  
 Emmie had heard him. Softly she  
 call'd from her cot to the next,  
 'He says I shall never live thro' it; O  
 Annie, what shall I do?'  
 Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise  
 little Annie, 'was you,  
 I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
 help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
 It's all in the picture there: "Little  
 children should come to  
 me"'—  
 Meaning the print that you gave us,  
 I find that it always can please  
 Our children, the dear Lord Jesus  
 with children about his knees.  
 'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but  
 then if I call to the Lord,  
 How should he know that it's me?  
 such a lot of beds in the ward!'  
 That was a puzzle for Annie. Again  
 she consider'd and said:  
 'Emmie, you put out your arms, and  
 you leave 'em outside on the  
 bed—  
 The Lord has so *much* to see to! but,  
 Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
 It's the little girl with her arms lying  
 out on the counterpane.'

## VII

I had sat three nights by the child—  
 I could not watch her for  
 four—  
 My brain had begun to reel—I felt I  
 could do it no more.  
 That was my sleeping-night, but I  
 thought that it never would  
 pass.  
 There was a thunderclap once, and a  
 clatter of hail on the glass,

And there was a phantom cry that I  
 heard as I tost about,  
 The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
 storm and the darkness with-  
 out;  
 My sleep was broken besides with  
 dreams of the dreadful knife  
 And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
 scarce would escape with her  
 life;  
 Then in the gray of the morning it  
 seem'd she stood by me and  
 smiled,  
 And the doctor came at his hour, and  
 we went to see to the child.

## VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools; we  
 believed her asleep again—  
 Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying  
 out on the counterpane—  
 Say that His day is done! Ah, why  
 should we care what they say?  
 The Lord of the children had heard  
 her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM OF THE  
PRINCESS ALICE

The Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of  
 Hesse-Darmstadt, died on the 14th of  
 December, 1878, aged thirty-five years.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that  
 which lived  
 True life live on—and if the fatal kiss,  
 Born of true life and love, divorce  
 thee not  
 From earthly love and life—if what  
 we call  
 The spirit flash not all at once from  
 out  
 This shadow into Substance—then  
 perhaps  
 The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
 praise  
 From thine own State, and all our  
 breadth of realm,  
 Where Love and Longing dress thy  
 deeds in light,  
 Ascends to thee; and this March morn  
 that sees

Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-  
 bloom  
 Break thro' the yews and cypress of  
 thy grave,  
 And thine Imperial mother smile  
 again,  
 May send one ray to thee! and who  
 can tell—  
 Thou — England's England - loving  
 daughter—thou  
 Dying so English thou wouldst have  
 her flag  
 Borne on thy coffin—where is he can  
 swear  
 But that some broken gleam from our  
 poor earth  
 May touch thee, while, remembering  
 thee, I lay  
 At thy pale feet this ballad of the  
 deeds  
 Of England, and her banner in the  
 East?

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

This poem tells of happenings which  
 took place in 1857 during the Sepoy Re-  
 bellion in India. 'Sir Henry Lawrence  
 took charge of Lucknow as Resident in  
 March of that year. The spread of re-  
 bellion in June confined him to the  
 defence of the city, where he died of  
 wounds on July 4. Brigadier Inglis, in  
 succession, then defended Lucknow for  
 twelve weeks until it was relieved on  
 September 25 by General Havelock, to  
 whom Sir James Outram (who accom-  
 panied as volunteer) had generously  
 ceded the exploit' (Palgrave).

BANNER of England, not for a season,  
 O banner of Britain, hast thou  
 Floated in conquering battle or flapt  
 to the battle-cry!  
 Never with mightier glory than when  
 we had rear'd thee on high  
 Flying at top of the roofs in the  
 ghastly siege of Lucknow—  
 Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but  
 ever we raised thee anew,  
 And ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew.

## II

Frail were the works that defended  
the hold that we held with our  
lives—

Women and children among us, God  
help them, our children and  
wives!

Hold it we might—and for fifteen  
days or for twenty at most.

‘Never surrender, I charge you, but  
every man die at his post!’<sup>10</sup>

Voice of the dead whom we loved, our  
Lawrence the best of the  
brave;

Cold were his brows when we kiss’d  
him—we laid him that night in  
his grave.

‘Every man die at his post!’ and there  
hail’d on our houses and halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and  
death from their cannon-balls,

Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,

Death while we stood with the mus-  
ket, and death while we stoopt  
to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the  
wounded, for often there fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing  
thro’ it, their shot and their  
shell,

Death—for their spies were among  
us, their marksmen were told  
of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro’  
the brain that could think for  
the rest;<sup>20</sup>

Bullets would sing by our foreheads,  
and bullets would rain at our  
feet—

Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round—

Death at the glimpse of a finger from  
over the breadth of a street,

Death from the heights of the mosque  
and the palace, and death in  
the ground!

Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!  
down, down! and creep thro’  
the hole!

Keep the revolver in hand! you can  
hear him—the murderous  
mole!

Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of  
the pickaxe be thro’!

Click with the pick, coming nearer  
and nearer again than before—

Now let it speak, and you fire, and the  
dark pioneer is no more;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew!<sup>30</sup>

## III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day

Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunder-clap echo’d away,

Dark thro’ the smoke and the sulphur  
like so many fiends in their  
hell—

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell—

Fiercely on all the defences our  
myriad enemy fell.

What have they done? where is it?  
Out yonder. Guard the Redan!

Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the  
Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran

Surging and swaying all round us, as  
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
daily drown’d by the tide—

So many thousands that, if they be  
bold enough, who shall es-  
cape?<sup>40</sup>

Kill or be kill’d, live or die, they shall  
know we are soldiers and men!

Ready! take aim at their leaders—  
their masses are gapp’d with  
our grape—

Backward they reel like the wave, like  
the wave flinging forward  
again,

Flying and foil’d at the last by the  
handful they could not sub-  
due;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## IV

Handful of men as we were, we were  
English in heart and in limb,

Strong with the strength of the race  
to command, to obey, to endure,

Each of us fought as if hope for the  
garrison hung but on him;

Still—could we watch at all points?  
we were every day fewer and fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but  
only a whisper that past: 50

'Children and wives—if the tigers leap  
into the fold unawares—

Every man die at his post—and the  
foe may outlive us at last—

Better to fall by the hands that they  
love, than to fall into theirs!'

Roar upon roar in a moment two  
mines by the enemy sprung

Clove into perilous chasms our walls  
and our poor palisades.

Rifleman, true is your heart, but be  
sure that your hand be as true!

Sharp is the fire of assault, better  
aimed are your flank fusil-  
lades—

Twice do we hurl them to earth from  
the ladders to which they had  
clung,

Twice from the ditch where they shel-  
ter we drive them with hand-  
grenades;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew. 60

Then on another wild morning an-  
other wild earthquake out-tore  
Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
twelve good paces or more.

Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden  
there from the light of the  
sun—

One has leapt up on the breach, crying  
out: 'Follow me, follow me!'

Mark him—he falls! then another,  
and *him* too, and down goes he.

Had they been bold enough then, who  
can tell but the traitors had  
won?

Boardings and rafters and door—an  
embrasure! make way for the  
gun!

Now double-charge it with grape! It  
is charged and we fire, and they  
run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let  
the dark face have his due!

Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
fought with us, faithful and  
few, 70

Fought with the bravest among us,  
and drove them, and smote  
them, and slew,

That ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner in India blew.

## VI

Men will forget what we suffer and  
not what we do. We can fight!

But to be soldier all day, and be sen-  
tinel all thro' the night—

Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,  
their lying alarms,

Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
shoutings and soundings to  
arms,

Ever the labor of fifty that had to be  
done by five,

Ever the marvel among us that one  
should be left alive,

Ever the day with its traitorous death  
from the loopholes around,

Ever the night with its coffinless  
corpse to be laid in the ground,  
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a  
deluge of cataract skies, 81

Stench of old offal decaying, and in-  
finite torment of flies,

Thoughts of the breezes of May blow-  
ing over an English field,

Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound  
that *would* not be heal'd,

Lopping away of the limb by the piti-  
ful-pitiless knife,—

Torture and trouble in vain,—for it  
never could save us a life.

Valor of delicate women who tended  
the hospital bed,

Horror of women in travail among the  
dying and dead,

Grief for our perishing children, and  
never a moment for grief,

Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering  
hopes of relief, 90



Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew—  
 Then day and night, day and night,  
 coming down on the still-shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

## VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true  
 what was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!  
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,  
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers, <sup>101</sup>  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of heaven!  
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!  
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

## (IN WALES)

The subject of this poem was thrown into the Tower during the reign of Henry V on a charge of heresy. He escaped to Wales, where he was captured four years later and burnt on the gallows as a traitor and heretic.

My friend should meet me somewhere  
 hereabout

To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow—  
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,  
 For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—  
 And God's free air, and hope of better things. <sup>10</sup>

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,  
 Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,  
 Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—  
 But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd  
 They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel—  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here  
 But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;  
 'Bara!'—what use? The shepherd, when I speak,  
 Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard 'Dim Saesneg,' passes, wroth at things of old— <sup>21</sup>  
 No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh  
 He might be kindlier; happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem  
 In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;  
 Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
 Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,

Who whilome spakest to the South in  
Greek <sup>29</sup>

About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was—thou hast come to  
talk our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all  
the world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that  
thou bringest

Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I  
crost

In flying hither? that one night a  
crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the  
city gates;

The king was on them suddenly with  
a host. <sup>40</sup>

Why there? they came to hear their  
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king—  
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him—took  
and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt—how many  
—thirty-nine—

Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor  
friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for your  
priest

Labels—to take the king along with  
him—

All heresy, treason; but to call men  
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with house-  
hold war, <sup>51</sup>

Now reddest with the blood of holy  
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—  
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor

sang  
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-  
lusting line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister  
grow,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

That were my rose, there my alle-  
giance due.

Self-starved, they say—nay, mur-  
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved. My friend  
was he,

Once my fast friend; I would have  
given my life <sup>60</sup>

To help his own from scathe, a thou-  
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have come  
to learn

Our Wiclif's learning; but the worldly  
priests,

Who fear the king's hard common-  
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-  
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O, had he  
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke  
for him,

But he would not; far liever led my  
friend

Back to the pure and universal  
church,

But he would not—whether that heir-  
less flaw <sup>70</sup>

In his throne's title make him feel so  
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his  
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,  
In matters of the faith, alas the while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of  
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my  
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Bev-  
erley!

Lord, give thou power to thy two wit-  
nesses,

Lest the false faith make merry over  
them! <sup>80</sup>

Two—nay, but thirty-nine have risen  
and stand,

Dark with the smoke of human sacri-  
fice,

Before thy light, and cry continu-  
ally—

Cry—against whom?  
 Him, who should bear the sword  
 Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly  
 boy;  
 Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
 My boon companion, tavern-fellow—  
 him  
 Who jibed and japed—in many a  
 merry tale  
 That shook our sides—at pardoners,  
 summoners,  
 Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries  
 And nunneries, when the wild hour  
 and the wine 91  
 Had set the wits aflame.  
 Harry of Monmouth,  
 Or Amurath of the East?  
 Better to sink  
 Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and  
 fling  
 Thy royalty back into the riotous fits  
 Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and  
 mine,  
 Thy comrade—than to persecute the  
 Lord,  
 And play the Saul that never will be  
 Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred  
 Arundel  
 Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the  
 flame, 100  
 The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his  
 clerks  
 Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,  
 Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,  
 molten  
 Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
 As holy Paul—a shame to speak of  
 them—  
 Among the heathen—  
 Sanctuary granted  
 To bandit, thief, assassin—yea, to  
 him  
 Who hacks his mother's throat—denied to him  
 Who finds the Saviour in his mother  
 tongue.  
 The Gospel, the priest's pearl, flung  
 down to swine— 110  
 The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who  
 will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy  
 friar.  
 Ah, rather, Lord, than that thy Gos-  
 pel, meant  
 To course and range thro' all the  
 world, should be  
 Tether'd to these dead pillars of the  
 Church—  
 Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
 Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack  
 heart, and life  
 Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how  
 long,  
 O Lord, how long!  
 My friend should meet me here.  
 Here is the copse, the fountain and—  
 a cross! 120  
 To thee, dead wood, I bow not head  
 nor knees.  
 Rather to thee, green boscase, work  
 of God,  
 Black holly, and white-flower'd way-  
 faring-tree!  
 Rather to thee, thou living water,  
 drawn  
 By this good Wiclif mountain down  
 from heaven,  
 And speaking clearly in thy native  
 tongue—  
 No Latin—He that thirsteth, come  
 and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking  
 me  
 To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine  
 arms,  
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and  
 blood 130  
 And holier. That was heresy.—My  
 good friend  
 By this time should be with me.—'Im-  
 ages?'  
 'Bury them as God's truer images  
 Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Pen-  
 ance?' 'Fast,  
 Hair-shirt and scourge—nay, let a  
 man repent,  
 Do penance in his heart, God hears  
 him.' 'Heresy—  
 Not shriven, not saved?' 'What prof-  
 its an ill priest  
 Between me and my God? I would not  
 spurn

Good counsel of good friends, but  
 shrive myself—  
 No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'—<sup>140</sup>  
 My friend is long in coming.—'Pil-  
 grimages?'  
 'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-  
 dances, vice.  
 The poor man's money gone to fat the  
 friar.  
 Who reads of begging saints in Scrip-  
 ture?'—'Heresy'—  
 Hath he been here—not found me—  
 gone again?  
 Have I mislearnt our place of meet-  
 ing?'—'Bread—  
 Bread left after the blessing?' how  
 they stared,  
 That was their main test-question—  
 glared at me!  
 'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now  
 He veils  
 His flesh in bread, body and bread to-  
 gether.'<sup>150</sup>  
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
 wolves,  
 'No bread, no bread. God's body!'  
 Archbishop, bishop,  
 Priors, canons, friars, bell-ringers,  
 parish-clerks—  
 'No bread, no bread!'—'Authority of  
 the Church,  
 Power of the keys!'—Then I, God  
 help me, I  
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
 whole days—  
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
 And rail'd at all the Popes that, ever  
 since  
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-  
 wealth  
 Into the church, had only proven  
 themselves<sup>160</sup>  
 Poisoners, murderers. Well—God par-  
 don all—  
 Me, them, and all the world—yea,  
 that proud priest,  
 That mock-meek mouth of utter An-  
 tichrist,  
 That traitor to King Richard and the  
 truth,  
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire  
 Amen!

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of  
 life  
 Be by me in my death.  
 Those three! the fourth  
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt  
 were they.  
 On *them* the smell of burning had not  
 past.  
 That was a miracle to convert the  
 king.<sup>170</sup>  
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arun-  
 del  
 What miracle could turn? *He* here  
 again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Him-  
 self,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Him-  
 self,  
 And doom'd to burn alive.  
 So, caught, I burn.  
 Burn? heathen men have borne as  
 much as this,  
 For freedom, or the sake of those  
 they loved,  
 Or some less cause, some cause far less  
 than mine;  
 For every other cause is less than  
 mine.  
 The moth will singe her wings, and  
 singed return,<sup>180</sup>  
 Her love of light quenching her fear  
 of pain—  
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
 fire?  
 Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stom-  
 ach'd! faint as I am,  
 God willing, I will burn for Him.  
 Who comes?  
 A thousand marks are set upon my  
 head.  
 Friend?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it  
 then!  
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well  
 disguised,  
 I knew thee not. Hast thou brought  
 bread with thee?  
 I have not broken bread for fifty  
 hours.  
 None? I am damn'd already by the  
 priest<sup>190</sup>  
 For holding there was bread where  
 bread was none—

No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.  
 Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?  
 Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.  
 I am not like to die for lack of bread,  
 For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

## COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord! In your raised brows I read  
 Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
 We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the King know you deign to visit him  
 Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet  
 Before his people, like his brother king?  
 I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then  
 So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself  
 To meet me, roar'd my name; the King, the Queen,<sup>10</sup>  
 Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them all  
 The story of my voyage, and while I spoke  
 The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be still!'  
 And when I ceased to speak, the King, the Queen,  
 Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,  
 And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice  
 In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.  
 And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to heaven.

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains  
 For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,<sup>20</sup>  
 As holy John had prophesied of me,  
 Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
 Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him  
 Who push'd his prow into the setting sun,  
 And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's Mouth,  
 And came upon the Mountain of the World,  
 And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,  
 We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic Queen—<sup>30</sup>  
 Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals we—  
 Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
 Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
 But our amends for all we might have done—  
 The vast occasion of our stronger life—  
 Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your Spain,  
 Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe  
 Will suck in with his milk hereafter—earth  
 A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No. We fronted there the learning of all Spain,<sup>40</sup>  
 All their cosmogonies, their astronomies.  
 Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden guess  
 Is morning-star to the full round of truth.  
 No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;  
 Some thought it heresy, but that would not hold.

King David call'd the heavens a hide,  
 a tent  
 Spread over earth, and so this earth  
 was flat.  
 Some cited old Lactantius; could it be  
 That trees grew downward, rain fell  
 upward, men  
 Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and be-  
 sides,  
 The great Augustine wrote that none  
 could breathe  
 Within the zone of heat; so might  
 there be  
 Two Adams, two mankinds, and that  
 was clean  
 Against God's word. Thus was I beaten  
 back,  
 And chiefly to my sorrow by the  
 Church,  
 And thought to turn my face from  
 Spain, appeal  
 Once more to France or England; but  
 our Queen  
 Recall'd me, for at last their High-  
 nesses  
 Were half-assured this earth might be  
 a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
 And Holy Church, from whom I never  
 swerved  
 Not even by one hair's-breadth of  
 heresy,  
 I have accomplish'd what I came to  
 do.

Not yet—not all—last night a  
 dream—I sail'd  
 On my first voyage, harass'd by the  
 frights  
 Of my first crew, their curses and their  
 groans.  
 The great flame-banner borne by  
 Teneriffe,  
 The compass, like an old friend false  
 at last  
 In our most need, appall'd them, and  
 the wind  
 Still westward, and the weedy seas—  
 at length  
 The land-bird, and the branch with  
 berries on it,

The carven staff—and last the light,  
 the light  
 On Guanahani! but I changed the  
 name;  
 San Salvador I call'd it; and the light  
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a  
 broad sky  
 Of dawning over—not those alien  
 palms,  
 The marvel of that fair new nature—  
 not  
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
 East,  
 Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw  
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and  
 beat  
 Thro' all the homely town from jas-  
 per, sapphire,  
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-  
 dius,  
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
 Jacynth, and amethyst—and those  
 twelve gates,  
 Pearl—and I woke, and thought—  
 death—I shall die—  
 I am written in the Lamb's own Book  
 of Life  
 To walk within the glory of the Lord  
 Sunless and moonless, utter light—  
 but no!  
 The Lord had sent this bright strange  
 dream to me  
 To mind me of the secret vow I made  
 When Spain was waging war against  
 the Moor—  
 I strove myself with Spain against the  
 Moor.  
 There came two voices from the Sep-  
 ulchre,  
 Two friars crying that, if Spain should  
 oust  
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the  
 fierce  
 Soldan of Egypt, would break down  
 and raze  
 The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon  
 I vow'd  
 That, if our princes harken'd to my  
 prayer,  
 Whatever wealth I brought from that  
 new world  
 Should, in this old, be consecrate to  
 lead

A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your princes  
gold enough  
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been  
a Moor,  
And breach'd the belting wall of  
Cambalu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces to  
the Moor,  
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-  
ter John,  
And cast it to the Moor. But *had* I  
brought <sup>110</sup>  
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir  
all  
The gold that Solomon's navies car-  
ried home,  
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue  
blood of Spain,  
Tho' quartering your own royal arms  
of Spain,  
I have not; blue blood and black blood  
of Spain,  
The noble and the convict of Castile,  
How!d me from Hispaniola. For you  
know  
The flies at home, that ever swarm  
about  
And cloud the highest heads, and mur-  
mur down  
Truth in the distance—these out-  
buzz'd me so <sup>120</sup>  
That even our prudent King, our  
righteous Queen—  
I pray'd them being so calumniated  
They would commission one of weight  
and worth  
To judge between my slander'd self  
and me—  
Fonseca my main enemy at their  
court,  
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,  
one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—  
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed  
—who sack'd  
My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
loosed

My captives, feed the rebels of the  
crown, <sup>130</sup>  
Sold the crown-farms for all but noth-  
ing, gave  
All but free leave for all to work the  
mines,  
Drove me and my good brothers home  
in chains,  
And gathering ruthless gold—a single  
piece  
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castil-  
lanos—so  
They tell me—weigh'd him down into  
the abysm—  
The hurricane of the latitude on him  
fell,  
The seas of our discovering over-roll  
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to  
the shore. <sup>140</sup>  
*There* was a glimmering of God's  
hand.

And God  
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O  
my lord,  
I swear to you I heard His voice be-  
tween  
The thunders in the black Veragua  
nights,  
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!  
Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?  
Given thee the keys of the great  
Ocean-sea?  
Set thee in light till time shall be no  
more?  
Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
world?  
Endure! thou hast done so well for  
men, that men <sup>150</sup>  
Cry out against thee. Was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?'  
  
And more than once in days  
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
drowning hope  
Sank all but out of sight, I heard His  
voice,  
'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the  
hand,  
Fear not.' And I shall hear His voice  
again—

I know that He has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work His  
will—  
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
I lying here bedridden and alone, <sup>160</sup>  
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
king—  
The first discoverer starves—his fol-  
lowers, all  
Flower into fortune—our world's way  
—and I,  
Without a roof that I can call mine  
own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal  
withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
scum  
I open'd to the West, thro' which the  
lust,  
Villainy, violence, avarice, of your  
Spain  
Pour'd in on all those happy naked  
isles—  
Their kindly native princes slain or  
slaved, <sup>170</sup>  
Their wives and children Spanish con-  
cubines,  
Their innocent hospitalities quenched  
in blood,  
Some dead of hunger, some beneath  
the scourge,  
Some over-labor'd, some by their own  
hands,—  
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Na-  
ture, kill  
Their babies at the breast for hate of  
Spain—  
Ah God, the harmless people whom we  
found  
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!  
Who took us for the very gods from  
heaven,  
And we have sent them very fiends  
from hell; <sup>180</sup>  
And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led  
the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
Queen

Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-  
forted!  
This creedless people will be brought  
to Christ  
And own the holy governance of  
Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who  
bore the Cross  
Thither, were excommunicated there,  
For curbing crimes that scandalized  
the Cross,  
By him, the Catalonian Minorite, <sup>190</sup>  
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who be-  
lieve  
These hard memorials of our truth to  
Spain  
Clung closer to us for a longer term  
Than any friend of ours at Court? and  
yet  
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am  
rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by  
my bed,  
And I will have them buried in my  
grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
God's  
Own voice to justify the dead—per-  
chance  
Spain, once the most chivalric race on  
earth, <sup>200</sup>  
Spain, then the mightiest, wealthiest  
realm on earth,  
So made by me, may seek to unbury  
me,  
To lay me in some shrine of this old  
Spain,  
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to  
Spain.  
Then some one standing by my grave  
will say,  
'Behold the bones of Christopher Col-  
lön'—  
'Ay, but the chains, what do *they*  
mean—the chains?'—  
I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
Who then will have to answer, 'These  
same chains  
Bound these same bones back thro'  
the Atlantic sea, <sup>210</sup>



Which he unchain'd for all the world  
to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the  
souls in hell  
And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
As they do—for the moment. Stay,  
my son  
Is here anon; my son will speak for  
me  
Ablie than I can in these spasms that  
grind  
Bone against bone. You will not. One  
last word.

You move about the Court; I pray  
you tell  
King Ferdinand who plays with me,  
that one  
Whose life has been no play with him  
and his <sup>220</sup>  
vers, fights,  
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fe-  
Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and  
condoned—  
That I am loyal to him till the death,  
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic  
Queen,  
Who fain had pledged her jewels on  
my first voyage,  
Whose hope was mine to spread the  
Catholic faith,  
Who wept with me when I return'd in  
chains,  
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin  
now,  
To whom I send my prayer by night  
and day—  
She is gone—but you will tell the  
King, that I, <sup>230</sup>  
Rack'd as I am with gout, and  
wrench'd with pains  
Gain'd in the service of His Highness,  
yet  
Am ready to sail forth on one last  
voyage,  
And readier, if the King would hear,  
to lead  
One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted; you  
have dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my  
poor thanks!  
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.  
A. D. 700)

I was the chief of the race—he had  
stricken my father dead—  
But I gather'd my fellows together. I  
swore I would strike off his  
head.  
Each of them look'd like a king, and  
was noble in birth as in worth,  
And each of them boasted he sprang  
from the oldest race upon  
earth.  
Each was as brave in the fight as the  
bravest hero of song,  
And each of them liefer had died than  
have done one another a  
wrong.  
*He* lived on an isle in the ocean—we  
sail'd on a Friday morn—  
He that had slain my father the day  
before I was born.

## II

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
and there on the shore was he.  
But a sudden blast blew us out and  
away thro' a boundless sea. <sup>10</sup>

## III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we  
never had touch'd at before,  
Where a silent ocean always broke on  
a silent shore,  
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long  
waterfalls  
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the  
base of the mountain walls,  
And the poplar and cypress unshaken  
by storm flourish'd up beyond  
sight,

And the pine shot aloft from the crag  
 to an unbelievable height,  
 And high in the heaven above it there  
 flicker'd a songless lark,  
 And the cock could n't crow, and the  
 bull could n't low, and the dog  
 could n't bark.  
 And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
 never a murmur, a breath—  
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all  
 of it quiet as death,<sup>20</sup>  
 And we hated the beautiful isle, for  
 whenever we strove to speak  
 Our voices were thinner and fainter  
 than any flittermouse-shriek;  
 And the men that were mighty of  
 tongue and could raise such a  
 battle-cry  
 That a hundred who heard it would  
 rush on a thousand lances and  
 die—  
 O, they to be dumb'd by the charm!—  
 so fluster'd with anger were  
 they  
 They almost fell on each other; but  
 after we sail'd away.

## IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting;  
 we landed, a score of wild birds  
 Cried from the topmost summit with  
 human voices and words.  
 Once in an hour they cried, and when-  
 ever their voices peal'd  
 The steer fell down at the plow and  
 the harvest died from the field,  
 And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
 and half of the cattle went  
 lame,<sup>31</sup>  
 And the roof sank in on the hearth,  
 and the dwelling broke into  
 flame;  
 And the shouting of these wild birds  
 ran into the hearts of my crew,  
 Till they shouted along with the shout-  
 ing and seized one another and  
 slew.  
 But I drew them the one from the  
 other; I saw that we could not  
 stay,  
 And we left the dead to the birds, and  
 we sail'd with our wounded  
 away.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers;  
 their breath met us out on the  
 seas,  
 For the Spring and the middle Sum-  
 mer sat each on the lap of the  
 breeze;  
 And the red passion-flower to the  
 cliffs, and the dark-blue clem-  
 atis, clung,  
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the  
 long convolvulus hung;<sup>40</sup>  
 And the topmost spire of the moun-  
 tain was lilies in lieu of snow,  
 And the lilies like glaciers winded  
 down, running out below  
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,  
 the blaze of gorse, and the  
 blush  
 Of millions of roses that sprang with-  
 out leaf or a thorn from the  
 bush;  
 And the whole isle-side flashing down  
 from the peak without ever a  
 tree  
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the  
 sky to the blue of the sea.  
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus  
 and vaunted our kith and our  
 kin,  
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and  
 chanted the triumph of Finn,  
 Till each like a golden image was pol-  
 len'd from head to feet  
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with  
 thirst in the middle-day heat.  
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
 blossom, but never a fruit!<sup>51</sup>  
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as  
 we hated the isle that was  
 mute,  
 And we tore up the flowers by the mil-  
 lion and flung them in bight  
 and bay,  
 And we left but a naked rock, and in  
 anger we sail'd away.

## VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits; all  
 round from the cliffs and the  
 capes,

Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
 fathom of grapes,  
 And the warm melon lay like a little  
 sun on the tawny sand,  
 And the fig ran up from the beach and  
 rioted over the land,  
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd  
 throne thro' the fragrant air,  
 Glowing with all-color'd plums and  
 with golden masses of pear, <sup>60</sup>  
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
 that flamed upon bine and vine,  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine;  
 And the peak of the mountain was ap-  
 ples, the hugest that ever were  
 seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, on each  
 other, with hardly a leaflet be-  
 tween,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest  
 health or than utterest shame,  
 And setting, when Even descended,  
 the very sunset aflame.  
 And we stay'd three days, and we  
 gorged and we madden'd, till  
 every one drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him,  
 and ever they struck and they  
 slew;  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparely,  
 and fought till I sunder'd the  
 fray,  
 Then I bade them remember my  
 father's death, and we sail'd  
 away. <sup>70</sup>

## VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire; we  
 were lured by the light from  
 afar,  
 For the peak sent up one league of fire  
 to the Northern Star;  
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook  
 like a man in a mortal affright.  
 We were giddy besides with the fruits  
 we had gorged, and so crazed  
 that at last  
 There were some leap'd into the fire;  
 and away we sail'd, and we past

Over that undersea isle, where the  
 water is clearer than air.  
 Down we look'd—what a garden! O  
 bliss, what a Paradise there!  
 Towers of a happier time, low down  
 in a rainbow deep  
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal  
 sleep! <sup>80</sup>  
 And three of the gentlest and best of  
 my people, whate'er I could  
 say,  
 Plunged head-down in the sea, and the  
 Paradise trembled away.

## VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,  
 where the heavens lean low on  
 the land,  
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glit-  
 ter'd o'er us a sun-bright hand,  
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side  
 of each man, as he rose from  
 his rest,  
 Bread enough for his need till the  
 laborless day dipt under the  
 west;  
 And we wander'd about it and thro'  
 it. O, never was time so good!  
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,  
 and the boast of our ancient  
 blood,  
 And we gazed at the wandering wave  
 as we sat by the gurgle of  
 springs,  
 And we chanted the songs of the  
 Bards and the glories of fairy  
 kings. <sup>90</sup>  
 But at length we began to be weary,  
 to sigh, and to stretch and  
 yawn,  
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and  
 the sun-bright hand of the  
 dawn,  
 For there was not an enemy near, but  
 the whole green isle was our  
 own,  
 And we took to playing at ball, and  
 we took to throwing the stone,  
 And we took to playing at battle, but  
 that was a perilous play,  
 For the passion of battle was in us, we  
 slew and we sail'd away.

## XI

And we came to the Isle of Witches  
 and heard their musical cry—  
 'Come to us, O come, come!' in the  
 stormy red of a sky  
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,  
 For a wild witch naked as heaven  
 stood on each of the loftiest  
 capes, 100  
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
 white sea-birds in a row,  
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
 on the wrecks in the sand be-  
 low,  
 And a hundred splash'd from the  
 ledges, and bosom'd the burst  
 of the spray;  
 But I knew we should fall on each  
 other, and hastily sail'd away.

And we came in an evil time to the  
 Isle of the Double Towers,  
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one  
 carved all over with flowers,  
 But an earthquake always moved in  
 the hollows under the dells,  
 And they shock'd on each other and  
 butted each other with clash-  
 ing of bells,  
 And the daws flew out of the towers  
 and jangled and wrangled in  
 vain,  
 And the clash and boom of the bells  
 rang into the heart and the  
 brain, 110  
 Till the passion of battle was on us,  
 and all took sides with the  
 towers,  
 There were some for the clean-cut  
 stone, there were more for the  
 carven flowers,  
 And the wrathful thunder of God  
 peal'd over us all the day,  
 For the one half slew the other, and  
 after we sail'd away.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint  
 who had sail'd with Saint Bren-  
 dan of yore,  
 He had lived ever since on the isle and  
 his winters were fifteen score,  
 And his voice was low as from other  
 worlds, and his eyes were  
 sweet,  
 And his white hair sank to his heels,  
 and his white beard fell to his  
 feet,  
 And he spake to me: 'O Maeldune, let  
 be this purpose of thine!  
 Remember the words of the Lord  
 when he told us, "Vengeance is  
 mine!"' 120  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in  
 war or in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers,  
 each taken a life for a life,  
 Thy father had slain his father, how  
 long shall the murder last?  
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
 the Past to be Past.'  
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard,  
 and we pray'd as we heard him  
 pray,  
 And the holy man he assoil'd us, and  
 sadly we sail'd away.

## XII

And we came to the isle we were  
 blown from, and there on the  
 shore was he,  
 The man that had slain my father. I  
 saw him and let him be.  
 O, weary was I of the travel, the trou-  
 ble, the strife, and the sin, 129  
 When I landed again with a tithe of  
 my men, on the Isle of Finn!

## DE PROFUNDIS:

## THE TWO GREETINGS

## I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,

Where all that was to be, in all that  
 was,  
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the  
 vast  
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-  
 ing light—  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 Thro' all this changing world of  
 changeless law,  
 And every phase of ever-heightening  
 life,  
 And nine long months of antenatal  
 gloom,  
 With this last moon, this crescent—  
 her dark orb  
 Touch'd with earth's light—thou com-  
 est, darling boy;  
 Our own; a babe in lineament and  
 limb  
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect  
 man;  
 Whose face and form are hers and  
 mine in one,  
 Indissolubly married like our love.  
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and  
 serve  
 This mortal race thy kin so well that  
 men  
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O  
 young life  
 Breaking with laughter from the dark;  
 and may  
 The fated channel where thy motion  
 lives  
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
 course  
 Along the years of haste and random  
 youth  
 Unshatter'd; then full-current thro'  
 full man;  
 And last in kindly curves, with gen-  
 tlest fall,  
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
 To that last deep where we and thou  
 are still.

## II

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,

From that great deep, before our  
 world begins,  
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as  
 he will—  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that true world within the world  
 we see,  
 Whereof our world is but the bound-  
 ing shore—  
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the  
 deep,  
 With this ninth moon, that sends the  
 hidden sun  
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest, dar-  
 ling boy.

## II

For in the world which is not our;  
 They said,  
 'Let us make man,' and that which  
 should be man,  
 From that one light no man can look  
 upon,  
 Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
 moons  
 And all the shadows. O dear Spirit,  
 half-lost  
 In thine own shadow and this fleshly  
 sign  
 That thou art thou—who wailest be-  
 ing born  
 And banish'd into mystery, and the  
 pain  
 Of this divisible-indivisible world  
 Among the numerable-innumerable  
 Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
 space  
 In finite-infinite Time—our mortal  
 veil  
 And shatter'd phantom of that infinite  
 One,  
 Who made thee unconceivably Thy-  
 self  
 Out of His whole World-self and all in  
 all—  
 Live thou! and of the grain and husk,  
 the grape  
 And ivy-berry, choose; and still de-  
 part  
 From death to death thro' life and life,  
 and find

Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
wrought  
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
But this main-miracle, that thou art  
thou,  
With power on thine own act and on  
the world.

## THE HUMAN CRY

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelu-  
iah!—  
Infinite Ideality!  
Immeasurable Reality!  
Infinite Personality!  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

## II

We feel we are nothing—for all is  
Thou and in Thee;  
We feel we are something—*that* also  
has come from Thee;  
We know we are nothing—but Thou  
wilt help us to be.  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

## SONNETS

## PREFATORY SONNET

TO 'THE NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled far and  
fast  
To touch all shores, now leaving to the  
skill  
Of others their old craft seaworthy  
still,  
Have charter'd this; where, mindful  
of the past,  
Our true co-mates gather round the  
mast;  
Of diverse tongue, but with a common  
will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
And crocus, to put forth and brave the  
blast.  
For some, descending from the sacred  
peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have  
leagued again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world  
about;  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn  
to seek  
If any golden harbor be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-  
FIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that  
knew you best,  
Old Brooks, who loved so well to  
mouth my rhymes,  
How oft we two have heard Saint  
Mary's chimes!  
How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
guest,  
Would echo helpless laughter to your  
jest!  
How oft with him we paced that walk  
of limes,  
Him, the lost light of those dawn-  
golden times,  
Who loved you well! Now both are  
gone to rest.  
You man of humorous-melancholy  
mark,  
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?  
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past  
away!  
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark.  
Σκιᾶς ὄναρ—dream of a shadow, go—  
God bless you! I shall join you in a  
day.

## MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle  
sails,  
They kept their faith, their freedom,  
on the height,  
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day  
and night  
Against the Turk; whose inroad no-  
where scales

Their headlong passes, but his foot-  
step fails,  
And red with blood the Crescent reels  
from fight  
Before their dauntless hundreds, in  
prone flight  
By thousands down the crags and  
thro' the vales.  
O smallest among peoples! rough  
rock-throne  
Of Freedom! warriors beating back  
the swarm  
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred  
years,  
Great Tsernogora! never since thine  
own  
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
the storm  
Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
taineers.

### TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes  
and fears,  
French of the French, and Lord of  
human tears;  
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit lau-  
rels glance  
Darkening the wreaths of all that  
would advance,  
Beyond our strait, their claim to be  
thy peers;  
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
years  
As yet unbroken, stormy voice of  
France!  
Who dost not love our England—so  
they say;  
I know not—England, France, all man  
to be  
Will make one people ere man's race  
be run:  
And I, desiring that diviner day,  
Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
courtesy  
To younger England in the boy my  
son.

### TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

#### BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

'Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.'

<sup>1</sup> ATHELSTAN King,  
Lord among Earls,  
Bracelet-bestower and  
Baron of Barons,  
He with his brother,  
Edmund Atheling,  
Gaining a lifelong  
Glory in battle,  
Slew with the sword-edge  
There by Brunanburh,  
Brake the shield-wall,  
Hew'd the linden-wood,<sup>2</sup>  
Hack'd the battle-shield,  
Sons of Edward with hammer'd  
brands

Theirs was a greatness  
Got from their grandsires—  
Theirs that so often in  
Strife with their enemies  
Struck for their hoards and their  
hearts and their homes.

### III

Bow'd the spoiler,  
Bent the Scotsman,  
Fell the ship-crews  
Doom'd to the death.  
All the field with blood of the fighters  
Flow'd, from when first the great  
Sun-star of morning-tide,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November, 1876).

<sup>2</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Lamp of the Lord God  
 Lord everlasting,  
 Glode over earth till the glorious crea-  
 ture  
 Sank to his setting.

## IV

There lay many a man  
 Marr'd by the javelin,  
 Men of the Northland  
 Shot over shield.  
 There was the Scotsman  
 Weary of war.

We the West-Saxons,  
 Long as the daylight  
 Lasted, in companies  
 Troubled the track of the host that we  
 hated;  
 Grimly with swords that were sharp  
 from the grindstone,  
 Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before  
 us.

## VI

Mighty the Mercian,  
 Hard was his hand-play,  
 Sparing not any of  
 Those that with Anlaf,  
 Warriors over the  
 Weltering waters  
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
 Drew to this island—  
 Doom'd to the death.

## VII

Five young kings put asleep by the  
 sword-stroke,  
 Seven strong earls of the army of  
 Anlaf  
 Fell on the war-field, numberless num-  
 bers,  
 Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII

Then the Norse leader—  
 Dire was his need of it,

Few were his following—  
 Fleed to his war-ship;  
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
 in it,  
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX

Also the crafty one  
 Constantinus,  
 Crept to his North again,  
 Hoar-headed hero!

## X

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
 The welcome of war-knives—  
 He that was reft of his  
 Folk and his friends that had  
 Fallen in conflict,  
 Leaving his son too  
 Lost in the carnage,  
 Mangled to morsels,  
 A youngster in war!

## XI

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
 The clash of the war-glaive—  
 Traitor and trickster  
 And spurner of treaties—  
 He nor had Anlaf  
 With armies so broken  
 A reason for bragging  
 That they had the better  
 In perils of battle  
 On places of slaughter—  
 The struggle of standards,  
 The rush of the javelins,  
 The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
 The wielding of weapons—  
 The play that they play'd with  
 The children of Edward.

## XII

Then with their nail'd prows  
 Parted the Norsemen, a  
 Blood-redden'd relic of  
 Javelins over  
<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the gathering of men.'



The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,  
Shaping their way toward Dyflen<sup>1</sup> again,  
Shamed in their souls.

XIII

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-land,  
Glad of the war.

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be car-  
-rion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-  
-skin—  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear  
it, and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to  
rend it, and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to  
gorge it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge—  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories—  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

[ILIAD, XVIII. 202]

So SAYING, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and  
round

<sup>1</sup> Dublin.

The warrior's puissant shoulders Pal-  
-las flung  
Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
The glorious goddess wreath'd a  
golden cloud,  
And from it lighted an all-shining  
flame.  
As when a smoke from a city goes to  
heaven  
Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
All day the men contend in grievous  
war  
From their own city, but with set of  
sun  
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
glare  
Flies streaming, if perchance the  
neighbors round  
May see, and sail to help them in the  
war;  
So from his head the splendor went to  
heaven.  
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
nor join'd  
The Achæans—honoring his wise  
mother's word—  
There standing, shouted, and Pallas  
far away  
Call'd; and a boundless panic shook  
the foe.  
For like the clear voice when a trum-  
pet shrills,  
Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a  
town,  
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;  
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês  
Was heard among the Trojans, all  
their hearts  
Were troubled, and the full-maned  
horses whirl'd  
The chariots backward, knowing griefs  
at hand;  
And sheer-astounded were the chari-  
oteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great Peleion's  
head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess  
made it burn.  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his  
mighty shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans  
and allies;

And there and then twelve of their  
 noblest died  
 Among their spears and chariots.

Heroic sailor-soul,  
 Art passing on thine happier voyage  
 now  
 Toward no earthly pole.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON  
 HER MARRIAGE

O you that were eyes and light to the  
 King till he past away  
 From the darkness of life—  
 He saw not his daughter—he blest  
 her: the blind King sees you  
 to-day,  
 He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
 ABBEY

Not here! the white North has thy  
 bones; and thou,

TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE  
 FLORENTINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred  
 years, and grown  
 In power, and ever growest, since  
 thine own  
 Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,  
 Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
 Hath sought the tribute of a verse  
 from me,  
 I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
 Cast at thy feet one flower that fades  
 away.

# TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

## DEDICATION

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY

WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST

AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST

THIS VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

### TO E. FITZGERALD

Fitzgerald was seventy-five when this was written in 1883. He died shortly after, before it was published.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb  
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile;  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-  
tree,

And watch your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand, and  
knee,

Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers;  
Who live on milk and meal and grass;  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,  
And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied,'  
As Shakespeare has it, airy-light

To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual  
height

Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again  
One night when earth was winter-  
black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;

And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had  
lost,

And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there  
roll'd

To meet me long-arm'd vines with  
grapes

Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me,  
wrought

To mould the dream; but none can  
say

That Lenten fare makes Lenten  
thought,

Who reads your golden Eastern lay,  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well;

A planet equal to the sun  
Which cast it, that large infidel

Your Omar; and your Omar drew  
Full-handed plaudits from our best  
In modern letters, and from two,

Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
Two voices heard on earth no more;  
But we old friends are still alive,

And I am nearing seventy-four,  
While you have touch'd at seventy-

five,

And so I send a birthday line  
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt

In some forgotten book of mine  
With sallow scraps of manuscript,

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take,  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

### TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
 While yet the blessed daylight made  
 itself  
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight,  
 and woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen  
 to seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all they  
 saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacri-  
 fice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to  
 man  
 And woman, and the secret of the  
 Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human  
 kings.<sup>10</sup>  
 The great God Arès burns in anger  
 still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
 Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dircê, smote,  
 and still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous  
 beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling  
 fathers call'd  
 The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as winter-  
 white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me  
 yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more than  
 man<sup>20</sup>  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts and  
 lays the deep,

Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways of  
 men.

Then, in my wanderings all the  
 lands that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho'  
 my wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the  
 nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the  
 Sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there<sup>30</sup>  
 To silver all the valleys with her  
 shafts—  
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy  
 term  
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead  
 for heat;  
 The noonday crag made the hand  
 burn; and sick  
 For shadow—not one bush was near—  
 I rose,  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows under-  
 neath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
 In anger; yet one glittering foot dis-  
 turb'd<sup>40</sup>  
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was  
 prest  
 Against the margin flowers; a dreadful  
 light  
 Came from her golden hair, her golden  
 helm  
 And all her golden armor on the grass,  
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin  
 eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine  
 grew dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said,  
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast  
 seen too much,  
 And speak the truth that no man may  
 believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight  
 that lives<sup>50</sup>

Behind this darkness, I behold her  
     still,  
 Beyond all work of those who carve  
     the stone,  
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-  
     hood,  
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a  
     glance,  
 And as it were, perforce, upon me  
     flash'd  
 The power of prophesying—but to me  
 No power—so chain'd and coupled  
     with the curse  
 Of blindness and their unbelief who  
     heard  
 And heard not, when I spake of  
     famine, plague,  
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire,  
     flood, thunderbolt, <sup>60</sup>  
 And angers of the Gods for evil done  
 And expiation lack'd—no power on  
     Fate  
 Theirs, or mine own! for when the  
     crowd would roar  
 For blood, for war, whose issue was  
     their doom,  
 To cast wise words among the multi-  
     tude  
 Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in  
     hours  
 Of civil outbreak, when I knew the  
     twain  
 Would each waste each, and bring on  
     both the yoke  
 Of stronger states, was mine the voice  
     to curb  
 The madness of our cities and their  
     kings. <sup>70</sup>  
     Who ever turn'd upon his heel to  
     hear  
 My warning that the tyranny of one  
 Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
 My counsel that the tyranny of all  
 Led backward to the tyranny of one?  
     This power hath work'd no good to  
     aught that lives,  
 And these blind hands were useless in  
     their wars.  
 O, therefore, that the unfulfill'd desire,  
 The grief for ever born from griefs to  
     be,  
 The boundless yearning of the proph-  
     et's heart— <sup>80</sup>

Could *that* stand forth, and like a  
     statue, rear'd  
 To some great citizen, win all praise  
     from all  
 Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'  
                                     In vain!  
 Virtue must shape itself in deed, and  
     those  
 Whom weakness or necessity have  
     cramp'd  
 Within themselves, immersing, each,  
     his urn  
 In his own well, draws solace as he  
     may.  
     Menceceus, thou hast eyes, and I  
     can hear  
 Too plainly what full tides of onset  
     sap  
 Our seven high gates, and what a  
     weight of war <sup>90</sup>  
 Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of  
     bits,  
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-  
     footed horse  
 That grind the glebe to powder! Stony  
     showers  
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arês crash  
 Along the sounding walls. Above, be-  
     low,  
 Shock after shock, the song-built  
     towers and gates  
 Reel, bruised and butted with the  
     shuddering  
 War-thunder of iron rams; and from  
     within  
 The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
 Lest she be taken captive—maidens, <sup>100</sup>  
     wives,  
 And mothers with their babblers of  
     the dawn,  
 And oldest age in shadow from the  
     night,  
 Falling about their shrines before  
     their Gods,  
 And wailing, 'Save us.'  
                                     And they wail to thee!  
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see  
     thine own,  
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies  
 The saving of our Thebes; for, yester-  
     night,  
 To me, the great God Arês, whose  
     one bliss



The faces of the Gods—the wise man's  
word,  
Here trampled by the populace under-  
foot,  
There crown'd with worship—and  
these eyes will find  
The men I knew, and watch the char-  
iot whirl  
About the goal again, and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-  
kings, 170  
In height and prowess more than hu-  
man, strive  
Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears  
Heroic hymns, and every way the  
vales  
Wind, clouded with the grateful in-  
cense fume  
Of those who mix all odor to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining  
fire.

'One height and one far-shining fire!  
And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require 180  
A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,  
If I should deem it over nice—  
The tolling of his funeral bell  
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And mixt the dream of classic times,  
And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the  
rhymes,  
That miss'd his living welcome,  
seem 189  
Like would-be guests an hour too late,  
Who down the highway moving on  
With easy laughter find the gate  
Is bolted, and the master gone.  
Gone into darkness, that full light  
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away  
By night, into the deeper night!  
The deeper night? A clearer day  
Than our poor twilight dawn on  
earth—  
If night, what barren toil to be!  
What life, so maim'd by night, were  
worth 200  
Our living out? Not mine to me

Remembering all the golden hours  
Now silent, and so many dead,  
And him the last; and laying flowers,  
This wreath, above his honor'd  
head,  
And praying that, when I from hence  
Shall fade with him into the un-  
known,  
My close of earth's experience  
May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK

HIDE me, mother! my fathers belong'd  
to the church of old,  
I am driven by storm and sin and  
death to the ancient fold,  
I cling to the Catholic Cross once  
more, to the Faith that saves.  
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,  
and the roar of waves,  
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied  
a noble name,  
I am flung from the rushing tide of the  
world as a waif of shame,  
I am roused by the wail of a child, and  
awake to a livid light,  
And a ghastlier face than ever has  
haunted a grave by night.  
I would hide from the storm without,  
I would flee from the storm  
within,  
I would make my life one prayer for a  
soul that died in his sin, 10  
I was the tempter, mother, and mine  
was the deeper fall;  
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my  
face, I will tell you all.

## II

He that they gave me to, mother, a  
heedless and innocent bride—  
I never have wrong'd his heart, I have  
only wounded his pride—  
Spain in his blood and the Jew—dark-  
visaged, stately and tall—  
A princelier-looking man never stepped  
thro' a prince's hall.

And who, when his anger was kindled,  
would venture to give him the  
nay?

And a man men fear is a man to be  
loved by the women, they say.  
And I could have loved him too, if the  
blossom can dote on the blight,  
Or the young green leaf rejoice in the  
frost that sears it at night; <sup>20</sup>  
He would open the books that I prized,  
and toss them away with a  
yawn,

Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the  
which my nature was drawn,  
The word of the Poet by whom the  
deeps of the world are stirr'd,  
The music that robes it in language  
beneath and beyond the word!  
My Shelley would fall from my hands  
when he cast a contemptuous  
glance

From where he was poring over his  
Tables of Trade and Finance;  
My hands, when I heard him coming,  
would drop from the chords or  
the keys,

But ever I fail'd to please him, how-  
ever I strove to please—  
All day long far-off in the cloud of the  
city, and there <sup>29</sup>

Lost, head and heart, in the chances of  
dividend, consol, and share—  
And at home if I sought for a kindly  
caress, being woman and weak,  
His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of  
snow on the cheek.

And so, when I bore him a girl, when I  
held it aloft in my joy,  
He look'd at it coldly, and said to me,  
'Pity it isn't a boy.'

The one thing given me, to love and to  
live for, glanced at in scorn!

The child that I felt I could die for—  
as if she were basely born!

I had lived a wild-flower life, I was  
planted now in a tomb;

The daisy will shut to the shadow, I  
closed my heart to the gloom;

I threw myself all abroad—I would  
play my part with the young

By the low foot-lights of the world—  
and I caught the wreath that  
was flung. <sup>40</sup>

## III

Mother, I have not—however their  
tongues may have babbled of  
me—

Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all  
but a dwarf was he,

And all but a hunchback too; and I  
look'd at him, first, askance,

With pity—not he the knight for an  
amorous girl's romance!

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in  
the light of a dowerless smile,

Having lands at home and abroad in a  
rich West-Indian isle;

But I came on him once at a ball, the  
heart of a listening crowd—

Why, what a brow was there! he was  
seated—speaking aloud

To women, the flower of the time, and  
men at the helm of state— <sup>49</sup>

Flowing with easy greatness and  
touching on all things great,

Science, philosophy, song—till I felt  
myself ready to weep

For I knew not what, when I heard  
that voice,—as mellow and  
deep

As a psalm by a mighty master and  
peal'd from an organ,—roll

Rising and falling—for, mother, the  
voice was the voice of the soul;

And the sun of the soul made day in  
the dark of his wonderful eyes.

Here was the hand that would help  
me, would heal me—the heart  
that was wise!

And he, poor man, when he learnt that  
I hated the ring I wore,

He helpt me with death, and he heal'd  
me with sorrow for evermore.

## IV

For I broke the bond. That day my  
nurse had brought me the  
child.

The small sweet face was flush'd, but  
it coo'd to the mother and  
smiled. <sup>60</sup>

'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with  
baby?' She shook her head,



And the motherless mother kiss'd it,  
and turn'd in her haste and fled.

But it died, and I thought of the child  
for a moment, I scarce know  
why.

## VII

Low warm winds had gently breathed  
us away from the land—

Ten long sweet summer days upon  
deck, sitting hand in hand—

When he clothed a naked mind with  
the wisdom and wealth of his  
own,

And I bow'd myself down as a slave to  
his intellectual throne,

When he coin'd into English gold some  
treasure of classical song,

When he flouted a statesman's error,  
or flamed at a public wrong,

When he rose as it were on the wings  
of an eagle beyond me, and  
past <sup>69</sup>

Over the range and the change of the  
world from the first to the last,

When he spoke of his tropical home in  
the canes by the purple tide,

And the high star-crowns of his palms  
on the deep-wooded mountain-  
side,

And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt  
to the brink of his bay,

And trees like the towers of a minster,  
the sons of a winterless day.

'Paradise there!' so he said, but I  
seem'd in Paradise then

With the first great love I had felt for  
the first and greatest of men;

Ten long days of summer and sin—if  
it must be so—

But days of a larger light than I ever  
again shall know—

Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro'  
life to my latest breath;

'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in true-  
est love no death.' <sup>80</sup>

## VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a  
warble plaintively sweet

Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
fluttering down at my feet;

I took it, he made it a cage, we fond-  
led it, Stephen and I,

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as  
many will say,

My sin to my desolate little one found  
me at sea on a day,

When her orphan wail came borne in  
the shriek of a growing wind,

And a voice rang out in the thunders  
of ocean and heaven, 'Thou  
hast sinn'd.'

And down in the cabin were we, for  
the towering crest of the tides

Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
cataract off from her sides, <sup>90</sup>

And ever the great storm grew with a  
howl and a hoot of the blast

In the rigging, voices of hell—then  
came the crash of the mast.

'The wages of sin is death,' and there  
I began to weep,

'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast  
me into the deep,

For, ah, God! what a heart was mine  
to forsake her even for you!'

'Never the heart among women,' he  
said, 'more tender and true.'

'The heart! not a mother's heart, when  
I left my darling alone.'

'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the  
father will care for his own.'

'The heart of the father will spurn  
her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the  
wife, <sup>99</sup>

The cloud of the mother's shame will  
enfold her and darken her life.'

Then his pale face twitch'd. 'O  
Stephen, I love you, I love you,  
and yet—'

As I lean'd away from his arms—  
'would God, we had never  
met!'

And he spoke not—only the storm;  
till after a little, I yearn'd

For his voice again, and he call'd to  
me, 'Kiss me!' and there—as I  
turn'd—

'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I  
clung to the sinking form,

And the storm went roaring above us,  
and he—was out of the storm.

## VIII

And then, then, mother, the ship stagger'd  
under a thunderous shock,  
That shook us asunder, as if she had  
struck and crash'd on a rock;  
For a huge sea smote every soul from  
the decks of the Falcon but  
one; <sup>109</sup>

All of them, all but the man that was  
lash'd to the helm had gone;

And I fell—and the storm and the  
days went by, but I knew no  
more—

Lost myself—lay like the dead by the  
dead on the cabin floor,

Dead to the death beside me, and lost  
to the loss that was mine,

With a dim dream, now and then, of a  
hand giving bread and wine,

Till I woke from the trance, and the  
ship stood still, and the skies  
were blue,

But the face I had known, O mother,  
was not the face that I knew.

## IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I  
saw so amazed me that I  
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would  
fling myself over and die!

But one—he was waving a flag—the  
one man left on the wreck—

'Woman,'—he graspt at my arm,—  
'stay there!'—I crouch'd upon  
deck— <sup>120</sup>

'We are sinking, and yet there's hope:  
look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail!'

In a tore so rough that I broke into  
passionate tears, and the wail

Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat  
was nearing us—then

All on a sudden I thought, I shall look  
on the child again.

They lower'd me down the side, and  
there in the boat I lay

With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-  
home, as we glided away,

And I sigh'd as the low dark hull dipt  
under the smiling main,

'Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now—  
with *him*—been out of my  
pain.'

## XI

They took us aboard. The crew were  
gentle, the captain kind,

But *I* was the lonely slave of an often-  
wandering mind; <sup>130</sup>

For whenever a rougher gust might  
tumble a stormier wave,

'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I'm coming to  
thee in thine ocean-grave.'

And again, when a balmier breeze  
curl'd over a peacefuller sea,

I found myself moaning again, 'O  
child, I am coming to thee.'

## XII

The broad white brow of the isle—  
that bay with the color'd  
sand—

Rich was the rose of sunset there, as  
we drew to the land;

All so quiet the ripple would hardly  
blanch into spray

At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd—  
'My child,'—for I still could  
pray,—

'May her life be as blissfully calm, be  
never gloom'd by the curse <sup>139</sup>

Of a sin, not hers!'

Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse

Who had borne my flower on her hire-  
ling heart; and an answer came

Not from the nurse—nor yet to the  
wife—to her maiden name!

I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew  
that hand too well—

And from it a scrap, clipt out of the  
'deaths' in a paper, fell.

'Ten long sweet summer days' of  
fever, and want of care!

And gone—that day of the storm—O  
mother, she came to me there!

## DESPAIR

'A man and his wife having lost faith in a God, and hope of a life to come, and being utterly miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandoned.'

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel  
there looking over the sand?  
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd  
us, and drew me to land?

## II

What did I feel that night? You are  
curious. How should I tell?  
Does it matter so much what I felt?  
You rescued me—yet—was it  
well  
That you came unwish'd for, uncalled,  
between me and the deep and  
my doom,  
Three days since, three more dark  
days of the Godless gloom  
Of a life without sun, without health,  
without hope, without any de-  
light  
In anything here upon earth? but, ah,  
God! that night, that night  
When the rolling eyes of the light-  
house there on the fatal neck  
Of land running out into rock—they  
had saved many hundreds from  
wreck—<sup>10</sup>  
Glared on our way toward death, I re-  
member I thought, as we past,  
Does it matter how many they saved?  
we are all of us wreck'd at  
last—  
'Do you fear?' and there came thro'  
the roar of the breaker a whis-  
per, a breath,  
'Fear? am I not with you? I am  
frighted at life, not death.'

## III

And the suns of the limitless universe  
sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we  
knew that their light was a  
lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but,  
however they sparkled and  
shone,

The dark little worlds running round  
them were worlds of woe like  
our own—

No soul in the heaven above, no soul  
on the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamen-  
tation and woe. <sup>20</sup>

## IV

See, we were nursed in the drear  
night-fold of your fatalist  
creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn,  
we had hoped for a dawn in-  
deed,

When the light of a sun that was com-  
ing would scatter the ghosts of  
the past,

And the cramping creeds that had  
madden'd the peoples would  
vanish at last,

And we broke away from the Christ,  
our human brother and friend,  
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He  
spoke, of a hell without help,  
without end.

Hoped for a dawn, and it came, but  
the promise had faded away;

We had past from a cheerless night to  
the glare of a drearier day;

He is only a cloud and a smoke who  
was once a pillar of fire,

The guess of a worm in the dust and  
the shadow of its desire— <sup>30</sup>

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of  
the weak trodden down by the  
strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all mas-  
sacre, murder, and wrong.

## VI

O, we poor orphans of nothing—alone  
on that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who  
 knew not that which she bore!  
 Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
 would be heavenly fruit—  
 Come from the brute, poor souls—no  
 souls—and to die with the  
 brute—

## VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity;  
 I know you of old—  
 Small pity for those that have ranged  
 from the narrow warmth of  
 your fold,  
 Where you bawl'd the dark side of  
 your faith and a God of eternal  
 rage,  
 Till you flung us back on ourselves,  
 and the human heart, and the  
 Age. 40

## VIII

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—  
 was in her and in me,  
 Helpless, taking the place of the pity-  
 ing God that should be!  
 Pity for all that aches in the grasp of  
 an idiot power,  
 And pity for our own selves on an  
 earth that bore not a flower;  
 Pity for all that suffers on land or in  
 air or the deep,  
 And pity for our own selves till we  
 long'd for eternal sleep.

## IX

'Lightly step over the sands! the  
 waters—you hear them call!  
 Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
 errors—away with it all!'  
 And she laid her hand in my own—she  
 was always loyal and sweet—  
 Till the points of the foam in the dusk  
 came playing about our feet.  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
 sweep us out to the main. 51  
 'Ah, God!' tho' I felt as I spoke I was  
 taking the name in vain—  
 'Ah, God!' and we turn'd to each  
 other, we kiss'd, we embraced,  
 she and I,

Knowing the love we were used to be-  
 lieve everlasting would die.

We had read their know-nothing  
 books, and we lean'd to the  
 darker side—

Ah, God, should we find Him, per-  
 haps, perhaps, if we died, if we  
 died;

We never had found Him on earth,  
 this earth is a fatherless hell—

'Dear love, for ever and ever, for ever  
 and ever farewell!'

Never a cry so desolate, not since the  
 world began,

Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
 coming of man! 60

## X

But the blind wave cast me ashore,  
 and you saved me, a valueless  
 life.

Not a grain of gratitude mine! You  
 have parted the man from the  
 wife.

I am left alone on the land, she is all  
 alone in the sea;

If a curse meant aught, I would curse  
 you for not having let me be.

## XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was  
 drunk with the water, it seems;  
 I had past into perfect quiet at length  
 out of pleasant dreams,

And the transient trouble of drown-  
 ing—what was it when match'd  
 with the pains

Of the hellish heat of a wretched life  
 rushing back thro' the veins?

## XII

Why should I live? one son had forged  
 on his father and fled, 69

And if I believed in a God, I would  
 thank Him, the other is dead,  
 And there was a baby-girl, that had  
 never look'd on the light;

Happiest she of us all, for she past  
 from the night to the night.

XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-born, her glory, her boast,  
Struck hard at the tender heart of the mother, and broke it almost;  
Tho' glory and shame dying out for ever in endless time,  
Does it matter so much whether crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime?

XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there, naked, amazed  
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd myself turning crazed,  
And I would not be mock'd, in a mad-house! and she, the delicate wife,  
With a grief that could only be cured, if cured, by the surgeon's knife,—  
80

XV

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,  
If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,  
And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space,  
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,  
When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-worm will have fled  
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?

XVI

Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writings? O, yes,  
For these are the new dark ages, you see, of the popular press,  
When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are whooping at noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and crows to the sun and the moon,  
90

Till the sun and the moon of our science are both of them turn'd into blood,

And Hope will have broken her heart, running after a shadow of good;

For their knowing and know-nothing books are scatter'd from hand to hand—

We have knelt in your know-all chapel too, looking over the sand.

XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well?

Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own;

Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan!

XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,  
The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for his gold,  
100

And so there were hell for ever! but were there a God, as you say,  
His love would have power over hell till it utterly vanish'd away.

XIX

Ah, yet—I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,  
Of a God behind all—after all—the great God, for aught that I know;

But the God of love and of hell together—they cannot be thought,

If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought!

## XX

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it  
mine? for why would you save  
A madman to vex you with wretched  
words, who is best in his grave?  
Blasphemy! ay, why not, being  
damn'd beyond hope of grace?  
O, would I were yonder with her, and  
away from your faith and your  
face! 110  
Blasphemy! true! I have scared you  
pale with my scandalous talk,  
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all  
in the way that you walk.

## XXI

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I  
breathe divorced from the  
past?  
You needs must have good lynx-eyes  
if I do not escape you at last.  
Our orthodox coroner doubtless will  
find it a felo-de-se,  
And the stake and the cross-road, fool,  
if you will, does it matter to  
me?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ,  
From out his ancient city came a Seer  
Whom one that loved and honor'd  
him, and yet  
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but  
worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his  
hand  
A scroll of verse—till that old man be-  
fore  
A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd  
and spoke:

'This wealth of waters might but  
seem to draw  
From yon dark cave, but, son, the  
source is higher, 10

Yon summit half-a-league in air—and  
higher  
The cloud that hides it—higher still  
the heavens  
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout  
The cloud descended. Force is from  
the heights.  
I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills.  
What hast thou there? Some death-  
song for the Ghouls  
To make their banquet relish? let me  
read.

'How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard! 20  
What power but the bird's could make  
This music in the bird?  
How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?  
But man to-day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen." 30

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless,  
and wilt dive  
Into the temple-cave of thine own  
self,  
There, brooding by the central altar,  
thou  
Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath  
a voice,  
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be  
wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst  
not know;  
For knowledge is the swallow on the  
lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there  
But never yet hath dipt into the  
abysm,  
The abysm of all abysms, beneath,  
within 40  
The blue of sky and sea, the green of  
earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for ever-  
more,

And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,

Or even than the Nameless is to me.

'And when thou sendest thy free  
soul thro' heaven,

Nor understandest bound nor bound-  
lessness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-  
dred names.

'And if the Nameless should with-  
draw from all 50

Thy frailty counts most real, all thy  
world

Might vanish like thy shadow in the  
dark.

'“And since—from when this earth be-  
gan—

The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name”—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O  
my son,

Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,

Thou canst not prove that thou art  
body alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
spirit alone, 60

Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
both in one.

Thou canst not prove thou art immor-  
tal, no,

Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay,  
my son,

Thou canst not prove that I, who  
speak with thee,

Am not thyself in converse with thy-  
self,

For nothing worthy proving can be  
proven,

Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be  
wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of  
doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms  
of Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring  
words, 70

She brightens at the clash of “Yes”  
and “No,”

She sees the best that glimmers thro'  
the worst,

She feels the sun is hid but for a  
night,

She spies the summer thro' the winter  
bud,

She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,

She hears the lark within the songless  
egg,

She finds the fountain where they  
wail'd “Mirage!”

“What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind 81  
Who see not what they do?”

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
That none but gods could build this  
house of ours,

So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
All work of man, yet, like all work of  
man,

A beauty with defect—till That which  
knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what  
we feel

Within ourselves is highest, shall de-  
scend

On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
last

According to the Highest in the High-  
est. 90

“What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,

And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?

What rulers but the Days and Hours

That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flow-  
ers,

And cap our age with snow?”

The days and hours are ever glancing  
by,

And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
shade, 100

Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
Pain,

But with the Nameless is nor day nor  
hour;

Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,

And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,

Or even than the Nameless is to me.

'And when thou sendest thy free  
soul thro' heaven,

Nor understandest bound nor bound-  
lessness,

Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-  
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self,

For nothing worthy proving can be  
proven,

Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be  
wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of  
doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms  
of Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring  
words, 70

She brightens at the clash of “Yes”  
and “No,”

She sees the best that glimmers thro'  
the worst,

She feels the sun is hid but for a  
night,

She spies the summer thro' the winter  
bud,

She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,

She hears the lark within the songless  
egg,

She finds the fountain where they  
wail'd “Mirage!”

“What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind 81  
Who see not what they do?”

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
That none but gods could build this  
house of ours,

So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
All work of man, yet, like all work of  
man,

A beauty with defect—till That which  
knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what  
we feel

Within ourselves is highest, shall de-  
scend

On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
last

According to the Highest in the High-  
est. 90

“What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,

And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?

What rulers but the Days and Hours

That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flow-  
ers,

And cap our age with snow?”

The days and hours are ever glancing  
by,

And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
shade, 100

Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
Pain,

But with the Nameless is nor day nor  
hour;

Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,



Break into "Thens" and "Whens" the  
Eternal Now—

This double seeming of the single  
world!—

My words are like the babblings in a  
dream

Of nightmare, when the babblings  
break the dream.

But thou be wise in this dream-world  
of ours,

Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
But make the passing shadow serve  
thy will. 110

"The years that made the stripling wise  
Undo their work again,  
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
The last and least of men;

Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,

And now one breath of cooler air  
Would loose him from his hold.

His winter chills him to the root,  
He withers marrow and mind; 120

The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
Is jutting thro' the rind;

The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
The palsy wags his head;

The wife, the sons, who love him best  
Would fain that he were dead;  
The griefs by which he once was wrung  
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-  
narrow life

Be yet but yolk, and forming in the  
shell? 130

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after  
storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the  
past

Is feebler than his knees;  
The passive sailor wrecks at last

In ever-silent seas;  
The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
The learned all his lore;

The changing market frets or charms 140  
The merchant's hope no more:

The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
And now is lost in cloud;

The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
To mix with what he plow'd;

The poet whom his age would quote  
As heir of endless fame—

He knows not even the book he wrote,  
Not even his own name.

For man has overlived his day, 150  
And, darkening in the light,  
Scarce feels the senses break away

To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird  
can fly.

"The years that when my youth began  
Had set the lily and rose

By all my ways where'er they ran,  
Have ended mortal foes;

My rose of love for ever gone,  
My lily of truth and trust— 160

They made her lily and rose in one,  
And changed her into dust.

O rose-tree planted in my grief,  
And growing on her tomb,

Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
Her blood is in your bloom.

O slender lily waving there,  
And laughing back the light,

In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'  
When all is dark as night." 170

My son, the world is dark with griefs  
and graves,

So dark that men cry out against the  
heavens.

Who knows but that the darkness is in  
man?

The doors of Night may be the gates  
of Light;

For wert thou born or blind or deaf,  
and then

Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou  
glory in all

The splendors and the voices of the  
world!

And we, the poor earth's dying race,  
and yet

No phantoms, watching from a phan-  
tom shore

Await the last and largest sense to  
make 180

The phantom walls of this illusion  
fade,

And show us that the world is wholly  
fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
As laughter over wine,

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

And vain the laughter as the tears,  
 O brother, mine or thine,  
 For all that laugh, and all that weep  
 And all that breathe are one  
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep      190  
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless  
 deep  
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
 itself  
 For ever changing form, but evermore  
 One with the boundless motion of the  
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set  
 The lamps alight, and call  
 For golden music, and forget  
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my  
 son—  
 But earth's dark forehead flings  
 athwart the heavens      200  
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and  
 yonder—out  
 To northward—some that never set,  
 but pass  
 From sight and night to lose them-  
 selves in day.  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,  
 And wish the dead, as happier than  
 ourselves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step  
 beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne  
 in white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
 hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and  
 crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day      210  
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent  
 Word  
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of  
 man.

"Tho' some have gleams, or so they say,  
 Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for  
 oft

On me, when boy, there came what  
 then I call'd,  
 Who knew no books and no philoso-  
 phies,  
 In my boy-phrase, "The Passion of  
 the Past."

The first gray streak of earliest sum-  
 mer-dawn,      220

The last long strife of waning crim-  
 son gloom,

As if the late and early were but  
 one—

A height, a broken grange, a grove, a  
 flower

Had murmurs, "Lost and gone, and  
 lost and gone!"

A breath, a whisper—some divine  
 farewell—

Desolate sweetness — far and far  
 away—

What had he loved, what had he lost,  
 the boy?

I know not, and I speak of what has  
 been.

'And more, my son! for more than  
 once when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself      230  
 The word that is the symbol of myself,

The mortal limit of the Self was  
 loosed,

And past into the Nameless, as a  
 cloud

Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs,  
 the limbs

Were strange, not mine—and yet no  
 shade of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of  
 self

The gain of such large life as match'd  
 with ours

Were sun to spark—unshadowable in  
 words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
 world.

"And idle gleams will come and go,      240  
 But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of  
 the Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below  
 When only Day should reign."

## PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And Day and Night are children of  
     the Sun,  
 And idle gleams to thee are light to  
     me.  
 Some say, the Light was father of the  
     Night,  
 And some, the Night was father of the  
     Light,  
 No night, no day!—I touch thy world  
     again—  
 No ill, no good! such counter-terms,  
     my son, 250  
 Are border-races, holding each its own  
 By endless war. But night enough is  
     there  
 In yon dark city. Get thee back; and  
     since  
 The key to that weird casket, which  
     for thee  
 But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
     mine,  
 But in the hand of what is more than  
     man,  
 Or in man's hand when man is more  
     than man,  
 Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-  
     men,  
 And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy  
     king,  
 And fling free alms into the beggar's  
     bowl, 260  
 And send the day into the darken'd  
     heart;  
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of  
     men,  
 A dying echo from a falling wall;  
 Nor care—for Hunger hath the evil  
     eye—  
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or  
     fold  
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
     looms;  
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious  
     tongue,  
 Nor drown thyself with flies in  
     honeyed wine;  
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled  
     bee,  
 And lose thy life by usage of thy  
     sting; 270  
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for  
     harm,

Nor make a snail's horn shrink for  
     wantonness.  
 And more—think well! Do-well will  
     follow thought,  
 And in the fatal sequence of this world  
 An evil thought may soil thy chil-  
     dren's blood;  
 But curb the beast would cast thee in  
     the mire,  
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptu-  
     ousness,  
 A cloud between the Nameless and  
     thyself,  
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the  
     wheel,  
 And climb the Mount of Blessing,  
     whence, if thou 280  
 Look higher, then—perchance—thou  
     mayest—beyond  
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
 And past the range of Night and  
     Shadow—see  
 The high-heaven dawn of more than  
     mortal day  
 Strike on the Mount of Vision!  
     So, farewell.'

## THE FLIGHT

ARE you sleeping? have you forgot-  
     ten? do not sleep, my sister  
     dear!  
 How *can* you sleep? the morning  
     brings the day I hate and fear;  
 The cock has crow'd already once, he  
     crows before his time;  
 Awake! the creeping glimmer steals,  
     the hills are white with rime.

## II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,  
     fold me to your breast!  
 Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and  
     cry myself to rest!  
 To rest? to rest and wake no more  
     were better rest for me,  
 Than to waken every morning to that  
     face I loathe to see.

## THE FLIGHT

Except his own meek daughter yield  
her life, heart, soul to one—

### VIII

I envied your sweet slumber, all night  
so calm you lay;  
The night was calm, the morn is calm,  
and like another day;  
But I could wish yon moaning sea  
would rise and burst the shore,  
And such a whirlwind blow these  
woods as never blew before.

### IV

For, one by one, the stars went down  
across the gleaming pane,  
And project after project rose, and all  
of them were vain;  
The blackthorn-blossom fades and  
falls and leaves the bitter sloe,  
The hope I catch at vanishes, and  
youth is turn'd to woe.

Come, speak a little comfort! all night  
I pray'd with tears,  
And yet no comfort came to me, and  
now the morn appears,  
When he will tear me from your side,  
who bought me for his slave;  
This father pays his debt with me, and  
weds me to my grave.

### VI

What father, this or mine, was he,  
who, on that summer day  
When I had fallen from off the crag  
we clamber'd up in play,  
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd,  
and took and kiss'd me, and  
again  
He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;  
he *was* my father then.

### VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a  
tyrant vice!  
The godless Jephtha vows his child  
. . . to one cast of the dice.  
These ancient woods, this Hall at last  
will go—perhaps have gone,

To one who knows I scorn him. O, the  
formal mocking bow,  
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase  
that masks his malice now—  
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam  
of all things ill—  
It is not Love but Hate that weds a  
bride against her will;

### IX

Hate, that would pluck from this true  
breast the locket that I wear,  
The precious crystal into which I  
braided Edwin's hair!  
The love that keeps this heart alive  
beats on it night and day—  
One golden curl, his golden gift, before  
he past away.

He left us weeping in the woods; his  
boat was on the sand;  
How slowly down the rocks he went,  
how loth to quit the land!  
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw  
the white sail run,  
And darken, up that lane of light into  
the setting sun.

### XI

How often have we watch'd the sun  
fade from us thro' the West,  
And follow Edwin to those isles, those  
Islands of the Blest!  
Is *he* not there? would I were there,  
the friend, the bride, the wife,  
With him, where summer never dies,  
with Love, the sun of life!

### XII

O, would I were in Edwin's arms—  
once more—to feel his breath  
Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship,  
with Edwin, even in death,

Tho' all about the shuddering wreck  
the death-white sea should  
rave,  
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows  
of the wave!

## XIII

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*? I  
swear and swear forsworn  
To love him most whom most I loathe,  
to honor whom I scorn? 50  
The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
yawn, my mother's ghost  
would rise—  
To lie, to lie—in God's own house—  
the blackest of all lies!

## XIV

Why—rather than that hand in mine,  
tho' every pulse would freeze,  
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of  
some foul disease.  
Wed him? I will not wed him, let them  
spurn me from the doors,  
And I will wander till I die about the  
barren moors.

## XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd  
her bridegroom on her bridal  
night—  
If mad, then I am mad, but sane if  
she were in the right.  
My father's madness makes me mad  
—but words are only words!  
I am not mad, not yet, not quite—  
There! listen how the birds 60

## XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding  
orchard trees!  
The lark has past from earth to heaven  
upon the morning breeze!  
How gladly, were I one of those, how  
early would I wake!  
And yet the sorrow that I bear is sor-  
row for *his* sake.

## XVII

They love their mates, to whom they  
sing; or else their songs, that  
meet  
The morning with such music, would  
never be so sweet!  
And tho' these fathers will not hear,  
the blessed Heavens are just,  
And Love is fire, and burns the feet  
would trample it to dust.

## XVIII

A door was open'd in the house—who?  
who? my father sleeps!  
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—  
some one—this way creeps! 70  
If he? yes, he—lurks, listens, fears his  
victim may have fled—  
He! where is some sharp-pointed  
thing? he comes, and finds me  
dead.

## XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but  
how my temples burn!  
And idle fancies flutter me, I know  
not where to turn;  
Speak to me, sister, counsel me; this  
marriage must not be.  
You only know the love that makes  
the world a world to me!

## XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but  
we were left alone.  
That other left us to ourselves, he  
cared not for his own;  
So all the summer long we roam'd in  
these wild woods of ours,  
My Edwin loved to call us then 'his  
two wild woodland flowers.' 80

## XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in  
God's free light and air,  
Wild flowers of the secret woods, when  
Edwin found us there,

Wild woods in which we roved with  
him, and heard his passionate  
vow,

Wild woods in which we rove no more,  
if we be parted now!

## XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to  
wander forth forlorn;  
We never changed a bitter word, not  
once since we were born;  
Our dying mother join'd our hands;  
she knew this father well;  
She bade us love, like souls in heaven,  
and now I fly from hell,

## XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light  
upon some lonely shore,  
Some lodge within the waste sea-  
dunes, and hear the waters<sup>90</sup>  
roar,  
And see the ships from out the West  
go dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace,  
and lights the old church-  
tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points  
five—O, me!—it strikes the  
hour—  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, what-  
ever ills betide!  
Arise, my own true sister, come forth!  
the world is wide.

## XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my  
eyes are dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up  
yonder by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a  
friend, and in a distant  
land!<sup>100</sup>

## XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is  
hard, and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as  
those that should be kind?  
That matters not. Let come what will;  
at last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth  
is equal to endure.

## TO-MORROW

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honor? last year—  
Standin' here be the bridge, when last  
yer Honor was here?  
An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of  
the mornin', 'To-morra,' says  
she.  
What did they call her, yer Honor?  
They call'd her Molly Magee.  
An' yer Honor 's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,  
But there 's rason in all things, yer  
Honor, for Molly was out of  
her mind.

## II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan  
night comin' down be the  
sthrame,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of  
yistherday in a dhrame—  
Here where yer Honor seen her—  
there was but a slip of a moon,  
But I hard thim—Molly Magee  
wid her bachelor, Danny<sup>10</sup>  
O'Roon—  
'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the cra-  
thur,' an' Danny says, 'Troth,  
an' I been  
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus  
O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>  
But I must be lavin' ye soon.' 'Ochone,  
are ye goin' away?'

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate,' he  
says, 'over the say'—  
'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an'  
I hard him, 'Molly asthore,  
I'll meet you agin to-morra,' says he,  
'be the chapel-door.'  
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'  
'O' Monday mornin', says he;  
'An' shure thin ye 'll meet me to-  
morra?' 'To-morra, to-morra,  
machree!'

Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor,  
that had no likin' for Dan,  
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to  
come away from the man, 20  
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' across  
me, as light as a lark,  
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'  
thin wint into the dark.  
But wirrah! the storm that night—the  
tundher, an' rain that fell,  
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the glin 'ud 'a  
dthrownded hell.

## III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin',  
an' hiven in its glory smiled,  
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that  
smiles at her sleepin' child—  
Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green,  
an' she turn'd herself roun'  
Wid a diamond dhop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',  
An' many 's the time that I watch'd  
her at mass lettin' down the  
tear,  
For the divil a Danny was there, yer  
Honor, for forty year. 30

## IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the  
rose an' the white o' the may,  
An' yer hair as black as the night, an'  
yer eyes as bright as the day!  
Achora, yer laste little whispber was  
sweet as the lilt of a bird!  
Achushla, ye set me heart batin' to  
music wid ivery word!  
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in  
sich an illigant han',

An' the fall of yer foot in the dance  
was as light as snow an the lan',  
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whin-  
iver ye walkt in the shstreet,  
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda,  
an' laid himself undher yer  
feet,  
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart an' a  
half, me darlin' and he  
Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a  
kiss of ye, Molly Magee. 40

But shure we wor betther frinds whin  
I crack'd his skull for her sake,  
An' he ped me back wid the best he  
could give at ould Donovan's  
wake—  
For the boys wor about her agin whin  
Dan did n't come to the fore,  
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but  
she put thim all to the door.  
An', afther, I thried her meself av the  
bird 'ud come to me call,  
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to  
naither at all, at all.

## VI

An' her nabors an' frinds 'ud consowl  
an' condowl wid her, airly an'  
late,  
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst  
over say to the Sassenach  
whate;  
He 's gone to the States, aroon, an'  
he 's married another wife,  
An' ye 'll niver set eyes an the face of  
the thraithur agin in life! 50  
An' to dhrame of a married man,  
death alive, is a mortal sin.'  
But Molly says, 'I 'd his hand-prom-  
ise, an' shure he 'll meet me  
agin.'

## VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd  
glory, an' both in wan day,  
She began to spake to herself, the cra-  
thur, an' whispber, an' say,  
'To-morra, to-morra!' an' Father Mo-  
lowny he tuk her in han',

'Molly, you 're manin',' he says, 'me  
dear, av I undherstan',  
That ye 'll meet your paärints agin an'  
yer Danny O'Roon afore God  
Wid his blessed Marthyr's an' Saints,'  
an she gev him a frindly nod,  
'To-morra, to-morra,' she says, an' she  
did n't intind to desave,  
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair  
was as white as the snow an a  
grave. 60

VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
diggin' the bog, an' they foun'  
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a  
corp lyin' undher groun'.

IX

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me  
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
'The devil take all the black lan', for  
a blessin' 'ud come wid the  
green!'  
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut  
his bit o' turf for the fire?  
But och! bad scan to the bogs whin  
they swallies the man intire!  
An' sorra the bog, that 's in hiven wid  
all the light an' the glow,  
An' there 's hate enough, shure, wid-  
out *thim* in the devil's kitchen  
below.

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I  
hard his Riverence say,  
Could keep their haithen kings in the  
flesh for the Jidgment day, 70  
An' faix, be the piper o' Moses, they  
kep' the cat an' the dog,  
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they  
lived be an Irish bog.

XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they  
foun' an the grass,  
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud  
see it that wint in to mass—

But a frish gination had riz, an' most  
of the ould was few,  
An' I did n't know him meself, an'  
none of the parish knew.

XII

But Molly kem limp'in' up wid her  
stick,—she was lamed iv a  
knee,—  
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye  
know him, Molly Magee?'  
An' she stood up strait as the queen  
of the world—she lifted her  
head—  
'He said he would meet me to-morra!'  
an' dhropt down dead an the  
dead. 80

XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye  
would start back agin into life,  
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer  
wake like husban' an' wife.  
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet  
for the frinds that was gone!  
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it  
cryin', 'Ochone!'  
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten  
childer, handsome an' tall,  
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if  
he had lost thim all.

XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both  
in wan grave be the dead boor-  
tree,<sup>1</sup>  
The young man Danny O'Roon wid  
his ould woman, Molly Magee.

XV

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blos-  
som an' spring from the grass,  
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as  
ye did—over yer Crass! 90  
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid  
his song to the sun an' the  
moon,

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.



An' tell thim in hiven about Molly  
 Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,  
 Till Holy Saint Pether gets up wid his  
 kays an' opens the gate!  
 An' shure, be the Crass, that 's bet-  
 ther nor cuttin' the Sassenach  
 whate,  
 To be there wid the Blessed Mother  
 an' Saints an' Marthys galore,  
 An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for  
 iver an' ivermore.

## XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honor what-  
 iver I hard an' seen,  
 Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to  
 dhrink yer health in potheen.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it  
 mun be the time about now  
 When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end  
 close wi' her paäils fro' the  
 cow.  
 Eh! tha be new to the plaäce—thou 'rt  
 gaäpin'—doesn't tha see  
 I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was  
 sweet upo' me?

Naäy, to be sewer, it be past 'er time.  
 What maäkes 'er sa laäte?  
 Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök  
 thruf Maddison's gaäte!

## III

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a  
 lighted to-night upo' one.  
 Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I  
 niver not listen'd to noän!  
 So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my  
 oän kettle theere o' the hob,  
 An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
 second, an' Steevie an' Rob. <sup>10</sup>

## IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou  
 sees that i' spite o' the men  
 I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
 'oonderd a-year to mysen;  
 Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es  
 ony lass i' the Shere;  
 An' thou be es pretty a tabby, but  
 Robby I seed thruf ye theere.

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an'  
 I beänt not vaäin,  
 But I niver wur downright hugly,  
 thaw soom 'ud 'a thowt ma  
 plaäin,  
 An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons  
 —ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt  
 sich a fool as ye thinks;  
 Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air,  
 as I be a-stroäkin' o' you,  
 But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I  
 wur sewer that it couldn't be  
 true; <sup>20</sup>  
 Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd  
 it wur pleasant to 'ear,  
 Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty,  
 but my two 'oonderd a-year.

## VI

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was  
 a-walkin' together, an' stood  
 By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the  
 foälk be sa scared at, i' Gig-  
 glesby wood,  
 Wheer the poor wench drowndid her-  
 sen, black Sal, es 'ed been dis-  
 graäced?  
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur  
 a-creeäpin' about my waäist;  
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's  
 gittin' ower fond,  
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt  
 foot fust i' the pond;  
 And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa  
 well, as I did that daäy,  
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha  
 hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'  
 the claäy. <sup>30</sup>

Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy  
taail, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoäm  
an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin'  
Yis.

But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was  
shaämed to cross Gigglesby  
Greeän,

Fur a cat may looök at a king, thou  
knavs, but the cat mun be  
cleän.

Sa we boäth on us kep' out o' sight  
o' the winders o' Gigglesby  
Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet!  
they pricks cleän thruf to the  
skin—

An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brok-  
ken shed i' the laäne at the  
back,

Weer the poodle runn'd at tha once,  
an' thou runn'd oop o' the  
thack;

An' tha squeedg'd my 'and i' the shed,  
fur there we was forced to  
'ide,

Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin',  
and one o' the Tommies be-  
side. <sup>40</sup>

## VII

Theere now, what art 'a mewin' at,  
Steevie? for owt I can tell—

Robby wur fust, to be sewer, or I  
mowt 'a liked tha as well.

## VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the  
while I wur chaängin' my  
gown,

An' I thowt, shall I chaänge my  
staäte? but, O Lord, upo'  
coomin' down—

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a mid-  
der o' flowers i' Maäy—

Why 'ed n't tha wiped thy shoes? it  
wur clatted all ower wi' claäy.

An' I could'a cried ammost, fur I seed  
that it couldn't be,

An', Robby, I gied tha a raätin' that  
sattled thy coortin' o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we  
was a-cleänin' the floor, <sup>49</sup>

That a man be a durty thing an' a  
trouble an' plague wi' indoor.

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to  
tha moor na the rest,

But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man, an' I  
knavs it be all fur the best.

## IX

Naäy—let ma stroäk tha down till I  
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,

But if I 'ed married tha, Robby,  
thou'd not 'a been worth thy  
milk,

Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but  
'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es  
all that I 'ears be true;

But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy,  
an' soä purr awaäy, my dear,

Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy  
fro' my oän two 'oonderd  
a-year.

Sweärin' ageän, you Toms, as ye used  
to do twelve year sin'!

Ye niver eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it  
wur at a dog coomin' in, <sup>60</sup>

An' boäth o' ye mun be fools to be  
hallus a-shawin' your claws,

Fur I niver cared nothink for neither  
—an' one o' ye deäd, ye knaws!

Coom, give hoäver then, weänt ye? I  
warrant ye soom fine daäy—

Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie  
one or tother awaäy.

Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye  
shan't hev a drop fro' the päail.

Steevie be right good manners bang  
thruf to the tip o' the taail.

## XI

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let  
Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh  
been the Steevie fur me!

Robby wur fust, to be sewer, 'e wur  
burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,

But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver  
patted a mouse. 70

Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
Tommies—Steevie, git down.

## XII

An' I beänt not väin, but I knaws I  
'ed led tha a quieter life  
Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! 'A  
faäithful an' loovin' wife!  
An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an'  
thy windmill oop o' the croft,  
Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did  
tha? but that wur a bit ower  
soft,  
Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi'  
a niced red faäce, an' es cleän  
Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a  
bran-new 'eäd o' the Queeän,  
An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen, fur,  
Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät  
That I niver not spied sa much es a  
poppy along wi' the wheät,  
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an'  
seeädin' tha haäted to see; 79  
'Twur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i'  
my oän blue chaumber to me.  
Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I  
could 'a taäen to tha well,  
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a  
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

## XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I  
be mysen o' my cats,  
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I  
hev n't naw likin' fur brats;  
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,  
an' they goäs fur a walk,  
Or sits wi' their 'ands afor 'em, an'  
doesn't not 'inder the talk!  
But their bottles o' pap, an' their  
mucky bibs, an' the clats, an'  
the clouts,  
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces  
an' maäkin' ma deäf wi' their  
shouts,  
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if  
they was set upo' springs,  
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions,  
an' saäyin' ondecnt things, 80  
An' a-callin' ma 'hugly mayhap to my  
faäce, or a-teärin' my gown—  
<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

## XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you,  
I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
Tom, lig theere o' the cushion, an'  
tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

## XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed  
I married the Tommies—O  
Lord,  
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I  
couldn't 'a stuck by my word.  
To be horder'd about, an' waäked,  
when Molly'd put out the light,  
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at  
ony hour o' the night!  
An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an'  
the mud o' 'is boots o' the  
stairs,  
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,  
an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the  
chairs! 100  
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a  
let me 'a hed my oän waäy,  
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they  
'ev n't a word to saäy.

## XVI

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an'  
sarved by my oän little lass,  
Wi' my oän little garden outside, an'  
my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,  
An' my oän door-poorch wi' the wood-  
bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it  
greeän,  
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a  
roäbin' the 'ouse like a queeän.

## XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens  
es I be abroad i' the laänes,  
When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor  
es be down wi' their haäches  
an' their paäins:  
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o'  
meät when it beänt too dear,

They maäkes ma a graäter lady nor 'er  
 i' the mansion theer, <sup>110</sup>  
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how  
 much to spare or to spend;  
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if  
 soä pleäse God, to the hend.

## XVIII

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! what  
 ha maäde our Molly sa laäte?  
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an'  
 theere—it be strikin' height—  
 'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf,' well  
 —I 'eärd 'er a-maäkin' 'er  
 moän,  
 An' I thowt to mysen, 'thank God that  
 I hev n't naw cauf o' my oän.'  
 Theree!

Set it down!

Now, Robby!  
 You Tommies shall waäit to-night  
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their  
 lap—an' it sarves ye right.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY  
BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

*Prologue**To General Hamley*

OUR birches yellowing and from each  
 The light leaf falling fast,  
 While squirrels from our fiery beech  
 Were bearing off the mast,  
 You came, and look'd and loved the  
 view

Long-known and loved by me,  
 Green Sussex fading into blue  
 With one gray glimpse of sea;  
 And, gazing from this height alone,

We spoke of what had been  
 Most marvellous in the wars your own  
 Crimean eyes had seen;  
 And now—like old-world inns that  
 take

Some warrior for a sign  
 That therewithin a guest may make  
 True cheer with honest wine—  
 Because you heard the lines I read  
 Nor utter'd word of blame,

I dare without your leave to head  
 These rhymings with your name,  
 Who know you but as one of those  
 I fain would meet again,  
 Yet know you, as your England knows  
 That you and all your men  
 Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
 When, in the vanish'd year,  
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was  
 driven,  
 And Wolseley overthrew  
 Arabi, and the stars in heaven  
 Paled, and the glory grew.

*The Charge*

THE charge of the gallant three hun-  
 dred, the Heavy Brigade!  
 Down the hill, down the hill, thou-  
 sands of Russians,  
 Thousands of horsemen, drew to the  
 valley—and stay'd;  
 For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hun-  
 dred were riding by  
 When the points of the Russian lances  
 arose in the sky;  
 And he call'd, 'Left wheel into line!'  
 and they wheel'd and obey'd.  
 Then he look'd at the host that had  
 halted he knew not why,  
 And he turn'd half round, and he bade  
 his trumpeter sound  
 To the charge, and he rode on ahead,  
 as he waved his blade  
 To the gallant three hundred whose  
 glory will never die—  
 'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill,  
 up the hill,  
 Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

## II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,  
 and the might of the fight!  
 Thousands of horsemen had gather'd  
 there on the height,  
 With a wing push'd out to the left and  
 a wing to the right,  
 And who shall escape if they close?  
 but he dash'd up alone

Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
 Like an Englishman there and then.  
 All in a moment follow'd with force  
 Three that were next in their fiery  
     course,  
 Wedged themselves in between horse  
     and horse,  
 Fought for their lives in the narrow  
     gap they had made—  
 Four amid thousands! and up the hill,  
     up the hill,  
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the  
     Heavy Brigade.

## III

Fell like a cannon-shot,  
 Burst like a thunderbolt,  
 Crash'd like a hurricane,  
 Broke thro' the mass from below,  
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
 Whirling their sabres in circles of  
     light!  
 And some of us, all in amaze,  
 Who were held for a while from the  
     fight,  
 And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the  
     right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud,—  
 O, mad for the charge and the battle  
     were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank  
     from sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whisper-  
     ing, all dismay'd,  
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
     Scarlett's Brigade!'

## IV

'Lost one and all' were the words  
 Mutter'd in our dismay;  
 But they rode like victors and lords  
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
 They rode, or they stood at bay—

Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
 Down with the bridle-hand drew  
 The foe from the saddle and threw  
 Underfoot there in the fray—  
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a  
     rock  
 In the wave of a stormy day;  
 Till suddenly shock upon shock  
 Stagger'd the mass from without,  
 Drove it in wild disarray,  
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer  
     and a shout,  
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd,  
     and reel'd  
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out  
     of the field,  
 And over the brow and away.

Glory to each and to all, and the  
     charge that they made!  
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
     the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the  
 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous  
 charge were the Scots Greys and the 2d  
 squadron of Inniskillens; the remainder  
 of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently  
 dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-  
 camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter, and  
 Shegog the orderly, who had been close  
 behind him.

*Epilogue*

IRENE

Not this way will you set your name  
 A star among the stars.

POET

What way?

IRENE

You praise when you should  
     blame  
 The barbarism of wars.  
 A juster epoch has begun.

## POET

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
 And that bright hair the modern sun,  
 Those eyes the blue to-day,  
 You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
 I would that wars should cease,  
 I would the globe from end to end  
 Might sow and reap in peace,  
 And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
 Or Trade re-frain the Powers  
 From war with kindly links of gold,  
 Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
 Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
 My friends and brother souls,  
 With all the peoples, great and small,  
 That wheel between the poles.  
 But since our mortal shadow, Ill,  
 To waste this earth began—  
 Perchance from some abuse of Will  
 In worlds before the man  
 Involving ours—he needs must fight  
 To make true peace his own,  
 He needs must combat might with  
 might,  
 Or Might would rule alone;  
 And who loves war for war's own sake  
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
 But let the patriot-soldier take  
 His meed of fame in verse;  
 Nay—tho' that realm were in the  
 wrong  
 For which her warriors bleed,  
 It still were right to crown with song  
 The warrior's noble deed—  
 A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
 For so the deed endures;  
 But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
 And that large phrase of yours  
 'A star among the stars,' my dear,  
 Is girlish talk at best;  
 For dare we dally with the sphere  
 As he did half in jest,  
 Old Horace? 'I will strike,' said he,  
 'The stars with head sublime,'  
 But scarce could see, as now we see,  
 The man in space and time,  
 So drew perchance a happier lot  
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
 The fires that arch this dusky dot—  
 Yon myriad-worlded way—

The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
 World-isles in lonely skies,  
 Whole heavens within themselves,  
 amaze  
 Our brief humanities.  
 And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
 Tho' carved in harder stone—  
 The falling drop will make his name  
 As mortal as my own.

## IRENE

No!

## POET

Let it live then—ay, till when?  
 Earth passes, all is lost  
 In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
 Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
 And deed and song alike are swept  
 Away, and all in vain  
 As far as man can see, except  
 The man himself remain;  
 And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
 Too many a voice may cry  
 That man can have no after-morn,  
 Not yet of those am I.  
 The man remains, and whatso'er  
 He wrought of good or brave  
 Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
 That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art  
 Not all in vain may plead  
 'The song that nerves a nation's heart  
 Is in itself a deed.'

## TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
 MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH  
 CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in  
 fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
wars, and filial faith, and |  
Dido's pyre;

Golden branch amid the shadows,  
kings and realms that pass to  
rise no more;

## II

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the  
'Works and Days,'  
All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a  
golden phrase;

## VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
fallen every purple Cæsar's  
dome—  
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
sound forever of Imperial  
Rome—

## III

Thou that singest wheat and wood-  
land,  
tilth and vineyard, hive and  
horse and herd;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
often flowering in a lonely  
word;

## IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath per-  
ish'd,  
and the Rome of freemen  
holds her place,  
I, from out the Northern Island  
sunder'd once from all the  
human race,

## IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
piping underneath his beechen  
bowers;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
whom the laughing shepherd  
bound with flowers;

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
I that loved thee since my day  
began,  
Wielder of the stateliest measure  
ever moulded by the lips of  
man.

## THE DEAD PROPHET

182—

## I

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
in the blissful years again to  
be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
unlaborious earth and oarless  
sea;

DEAD!  
And the Muses cried with a stormy  
cry,  
'Send them no more, for evermore.  
Let the people die.'

## VI

Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal  
Mind;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human  
kind;

## II

Dead!  
'Is it *he* then brought so low?'  
And a careless people flock'd from the  
fields  
With a purse to pay for the show.

## VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;  
star that gildest yet this phan-  
tom shore;

## III

Dead, who had served his time,  
Was one of the people's kings,

Had labor'd in lifting them out of  
 slime,  
 And showing them, souls have  
 wings

## IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
 His friends had stript him bare,  
 And roll'd his nakedness everyway  
 That all the crowd might stare.

'Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound  
 ran  
 Thro' palace and cottage door,  
 For he touch'd on the whole sad planet  
 of man,  
 The kings and the rich and the  
 poor;

## XI

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
 And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
 On its barkless bones, stood stark by  
 the dead;  
 And behind him, low in the West,

'And he sung not alone of an old sun  
 set,  
 But a sun coming up in his youth!  
 Great and noble—O, yes—but yet—  
 For man is a lover of truth,

## VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and  
 light,  
 And blurr'd in color and form,  
 The sun hung over the gates of night,  
 And glared at a coming storm.

## XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she  
 go  
 Stark-naked, and up or down,  
 Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless  
 snow,  
 Or the foulest sewer of the town—

## VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,  
 That on dumb death had thriven;  
 They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon  
 earth,  
 And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in  
 heaven.

## XIII

'Noble and great—O, ay—but then,  
 Tho' a prophet should have his due,  
 Was he noblier-fashion'd than other  
 men?  
 Shall we see to it, I and you?

## VIII

She knelt—'We worship him'—all but  
 wept—  
 'So great, so noble, was he!'  
 She clear'd her sight, she arose, she  
 swept  
 The dust of earth from her knee.

## XIV

'For since he would sit on a prophet's  
 seat,  
 As a lord of the human soul,  
 We needs must scan him from head to  
 feet,  
 Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

## IX

'Great! for he spoke and the people  
 heard,  
 And his eloquence caught like a  
 flame  
 From zone to zone of the world, till  
 his word  
 Had won him a noble name.

## XV

His wife and his child stood by him in  
 tears,  
 But she—she push'd them aside.  
 'Tho' a name may last for a thousand  
 years,  
 Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.



## XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway  
 still,  
 Had often truckled and cower'd  
 When he rose in his wrath, and had  
 yielded her will  
 To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.  
 'Small blemish upon the skin!  
 But I think we know what is fair with-  
 out  
 If often as foul within.'

## XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from  
 part,  
 And out of his body she drew  
 The red 'blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and  
 heart;  
 She held them up to the view;

## XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
 And all the people were pleased;  
 'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
 'And the liver is half-diseased!'

## XX

She tore the prophet after death,  
 And the people paid her well.  
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;  
 One shriek'd, 'The fires of hell!'

## EARLY SPRING

## I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And domes the red-plow'd hills  
 With loving blue;  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The throistles too.

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc.,  
 when torn by the conqueror out of the  
 body of the conquered.

## II

Opens a door in heaven;  
 From skies of glass  
 A Jacob's ladder falls  
 On greening grass,  
 And o'er the mountain-walls  
 Young angels pass.

## III

Before them fleets the shower,  
 And burst the buds,  
 And shine the level lands,  
 And flash the floods;  
 The stars are from their hands  
 Flung thro' the woods,

## IV

The woods with living airs  
 How softly fann'd,  
 Light airs from where the deep,  
 All down the sand,  
 Is breathing in his sleep,  
 Heard by the land.

O, follow, leaping blood,  
 The season's lure!  
 O heart, look down and up  
 Serene, secure,  
 Warm as the crocus cup,  
 Like snowdrops, pure!

## VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade  
 Thro' some slight spell,  
 A gleam from yonder vale,  
 Some far blue fell,  
 And sympathies, how frail,  
 In sound and smell!

## VII

Till at thy chuckled note,  
 Thou twinkling bird,  
 The fairy fancies range,  
 And, lightly stirr'd,  
 Ring little bells of change  
 From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,  
And thaws the cold, and fills  
The flower with dew;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY  
BROTHER'S SONNETS

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune  
The breakers lash the shores;  
The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors.

And thou hast vanish'd from thine  
own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

II

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark;

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet, surely to be found  
When Truth is found again.

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with  
thee,  
As all my hopes were thine—  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine!

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row!  
So they row'd, and there we landed—  
'O venusta Sirmio!'  
There to me thro' all the groves of  
olive in the summer glow,  
There beneath the Roman ruin where  
the purple flowers grow,  
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the  
Poet's hopeless woe,  
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen  
hundred years ago,  
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd  
to and fro  
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
Garda Lake below  
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
silvery Sirmio!

HELEN'S TOWER

[Written at the request of my friend,  
Lord Dufferin.]

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.  
Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love in letter'd gold.  
Love is in and out of time,  
I am mortal stone and lime.  
Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long!  
I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD  
DE REDCLIFFE

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand  
among our best

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

And noblest, now thy long day's  
work hath ceased,  
Here silent in our Minster of the West  
Who wert the voice of England in  
the East.

### EPITAPH ON GENERAL GORDON

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
tyrant's foe,  
Now somewhere dead far in the  
waste Soudan,  
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men  
know  
This earth has never borne a nobler  
man.

### EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

*Fiat Lux* (his motto)

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light  
—while Time shall last!'  
Thou sawest a glory growing on the  
night,  
But not the shadows which that light  
would cast,  
Till shadows vanish in the Light of  
Light.

### TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to  
know  
The limits of resistance, and the  
bounds  
Determining concession; still be bold  
Not only to slight praise but suffer  
scorn;  
And be thy heart a fortress to main-  
tain  
The day against the moment, and the  
year  
Against the day; thy voice, a music  
heard

Thro' all the yells and counter-yells  
of feud  
And faction, and thy will, a power to  
make  
This ever-changing world of circum-  
stance,  
In changing, chime with never-chang-  
ing Law.

### HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn  
night,  
Then drink to England, every  
guest;  
That man 's the best Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.  
May freedom's oak for ever live  
With stronger life from day to day;  
That man 's the true Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch  
away.

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England,  
round and round.  
To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole!  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole!  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm!  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great name of England drink,  
my friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round  
and round.  
To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire!  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire!!  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail;  
We founded many a mighty state;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great!!  
Hands all round!  
God the traitor's hope confound!

To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
 my friends,  
 And the great name of England,  
 round and round.

## FREEDOM

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
 While yet thy fresh and virgin soul  
 Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
 The glittering Capitol;

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
 But scarce of such majestic mien  
 As here with forehead vapor-swathed  
 In meadows ever green;

## III

For thou—when Athens reign'd and  
 Rome,  
 Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
 pain  
 To mark in many a freeman's home  
 The slave, the scourge, the chain;

## IV

O follower of the Vision, still  
 In motion to the distant gleam,  
 Howe'er blind force and brainless will  
 May jar thy golden dream

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
 Of civic Hate no more to be,  
 Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
 Till every soul be free;

## VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar  
 By changes all too fierce and fast  
 This order of her Human Star,  
 This heritage of the past;

## VII

O scorner of the party cry  
 That wanders from the public good,  
 Thou—when the nations rear on high  
 Their idol smear'd with blood,

## VIII

And when they roll their idol down—  
 Of saner worship sanely proud;  
 Thou loather of the lawless crown  
 As of the lawless crowd;

## IX

How long thine ever-growing mind  
 Hath still'd the blast and strown the  
 wave,  
 Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
 To sing thee to thy grave,

## X

Men loud against all forms of power—  
 Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
 tongues,  
 Expecting all things in an hour—  
 Brass mouths and iron lungs!

## POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier  
 skies,  
 Old Virgil who would write ten  
 lines, they say,  
 At dawn, and lavish all the golden  
 day  
 To make them wealthier in his read-  
 ers' eyes;  
 And you, old popular Horace, you the  
 wise  
 Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd  
 lay,  
 And you, that wear a wreath of  
 sweeter bay,  
 Catullus, whose dead songster never  
 dies;  
 If, glancing downward on the kindly  
 sphere

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

That once had roll'd you round and  
round the sun,  
You see your Art still shrined in hu-  
man shelves,  
You should be jubilant that you flour-  
ish'd here  
Before the Love of Letters, over-  
done,  
Had swamp'd the sacred poets with  
themselves.

### TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEATRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of human  
life,  
Which else with all its pains, and  
griefs, and deaths,  
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of  
dawn  
That brightens thro' the Mother's ten-  
der eyes,  
And warms the child's awakening  
world—and one  
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit draws  
the child

To move in other spheres. The Mother  
weeps  
At that white funeral of the single life,  
Her maiden daughter's marriage; and  
her tears  
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the  
child  
Is happy—even in leaving *her!* but  
thou,  
True daughter, whose all-faithful,  
filial eyes  
Have seen the loneliness of earthly  
thrones,  
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,  
nor let  
This later light of Love have risen in  
vain,  
But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between  
The two that love thee, lead a summer  
life,  
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
each Love,  
Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven  
Between two suns, and drawing down  
from both  
The light and genial warmth of double  
day.

# LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.

TO MY WIFE  
I DEDICATE  
THIS DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE  
AND  
THE POEMS WHICH FOLLOW

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson! half the morning  
have I paced these sandy  
tracts,  
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roar-  
ing into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood  
while I heard the curlews call,  
I myself so close on death, and death  
itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she  
the faultless, the divine;  
And you liken—boyish babble—this  
boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless  
of a foolish past;  
Babble, babble; our old England may  
go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-vic-  
tim? call him dotard in your  
rage?  
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well  
might fool a dotard's age. 10

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet  
perhaps she was not wise;  
I remember how you kiss'd the min-  
iature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—  
Amy's arms about my neck—

Happy children in a sunbeam sitting  
on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she  
that clasp'd my neck had  
flown;  
I was left within the shadow sitting on  
the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment,  
will you sicken for her sake?  
You, not you! your modern amorist is  
of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy  
was a timid child;  
But your Judith—but your worldling  
—*she* had never driven me  
wild. 20

She that holds the diamond necklace  
dearer than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer  
than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on  
his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part  
us,' she the would-be-widow  
wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings  
—father, mother—be content,  
Even the homely farm can teach us  
there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking  
now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with  
his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to  
crush the Moslem in his pride;

Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead  
the cause in which he died. <sup>30</sup>

Yet how often I and Amy in the  
mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on  
that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where  
of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson  
with the shield of Locksley—  
there,

All in white Italian marble, looking  
still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead  
the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead  
her aged husband now—  
I, this old white-headed dreamer,  
stooped and kiss'd her marble  
brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies,  
furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earth-  
quakes of the planet's dawning  
years. <sup>40</sup>

Fires that shook me once, but now to  
silent ashes fallen away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the  
gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and  
mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues—I forgive them—black  
in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac,  
some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone  
as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my  
life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she  
with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom,  
Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,

Woman to her inmost heart, and  
woman to her tender feet, <sup>50</sup>

Very woman of very woman, nurse of  
ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain  
that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while  
I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling  
at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leon-  
ard early lost at sea;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and  
mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother,  
wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once  
had beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipt,  
being true as he was brave;  
Good, for good is good, he follow'd,  
yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning  
barren Death as lord of all, <sup>61</sup>  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing  
curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw  
the death, but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and  
sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since  
our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the lead-  
ing light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd  
the slave, and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred pas-  
sion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler  
hunting grounds beyond the  
night;  
Even the black Australian dying hopes  
he shall return, a white. <sup>70</sup>

# LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Truth for truth, and good for good!  
The good, the true, the pure,  
the just—

Take the charm 'For ever' from them,  
and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,'  
lost within a growing gloom;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the  
silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, tri-  
umphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage  
into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of  
the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till  
ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old As-  
syrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle  
—iron-hearted victors they. <sup>80</sup>

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led  
the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty  
thousand human skulls;

Then, and here in Edward's time, an  
age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung  
the conquer'd Christian into  
flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters,  
said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches  
look'd the twin of heathen  
hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man  
had coin'd himself a curse:  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which  
was crueller? which was  
worse?

France had shown a light to all men,  
preach'd a Gospel, all men's  
good; <sup>89</sup>  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd  
and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain,  
watching till the day begun—  
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness  
—from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the pas-  
sions of the primal clan?  
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,'  
still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants  
maim the helpless horse, and  
drive  
Innocent cattle under thatch, and  
burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrong-  
ers—burnt at midnight, found  
at morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with  
their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we  
devils? are we men?  
Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would  
that he were here again, <sup>100</sup>

He that in his Catholic wholeness used  
to call the very flowers  
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—  
whose pains are hardly less  
than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who  
can tell how all will end?  
Read the wide world's annals, you,  
and take their wisdom for your  
friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present  
fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour,  
but dream not that the hour  
will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave  
you courage to be wise—  
When was age so cramm'd with men-  
ace? madness? written, spoken  
lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and,  
laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to weakest as to strongest, 'Ye  
are equals, equal-born.' <sup>110</sup>



## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be  
level with the flat.

Charm us, orator, till the lion look no  
larger than the cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of over-  
heated language loom

Larger than the lion,—Demos end in  
working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall  
we fight her? shall we yield?

Pause! before you sound the trumpet,  
hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under  
one Imperial sceptre now,

Shall we hold them? shall we loose  
them? take the suffrage of the  
plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow  
Truth if only you and you,

Rivals of realm-ruining party, when  
you speak were wholly true. <sup>120</sup>

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found,  
and more than once, and still  
could find,

Sons of God, and kings of men in utter  
nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to  
the practised hustings-liar;

So the higher wields the lower, while  
the lower is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is  
royal-born by right divine;

Here and there my lord is lower than  
his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once  
again the sickening game;

Freedom, free to slay herself, and dy-  
ing while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom  
known to Europe, known to  
all;

Step by step we rose to greatness,—  
thro' the tonguesters we may  
fall. <sup>130</sup>

You that woo the Voices—tell them  
'old experience is a fool,'

Teach your flatter'd kings that only  
those who cannot read can  
rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but  
set no meek ones in their place;

Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt  
your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and,  
yelling with the yelling street,

Set the feet above the brain and swear  
the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without  
the faith, without the hope,

Break the State, the Church, the  
Throne, and roll their ruins  
down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist,  
realist, rhymester, play your  
part,

Paint the mortal shame of nature with  
the living hues of art. <sup>140</sup>

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip  
your own foul passions bare;

Down with Reticence, down with  
Reverence—forward—naked  
let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood  
with the drainage of your  
sewer;

Send the drain into the fountain, lest  
the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in  
the troughs of Zolaism,—

Forward, forward, ay, and backward,  
downward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to  
lower the rising race of men;

Have we risen from out the beast,  
then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken  
at your lawless din,

Dust in wholesome old-world dust be-  
fore the newer world begin. <sup>150</sup>

Heated am I? you—you wonder—  
well, it scarce becomes mine  
age—

Patience! let the dying actor mouth  
his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the  
dotard fall asleep?

Noises of a current narrowing, not the  
music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think  
gray thoughts, for I am gray;  
After all the stormy changes shall we  
find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacob-  
ism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro'  
the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the sys-  
tems, kingdoms and republics  
fall, 159

Something kindlier, higher, holier—  
all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led  
by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length with all  
the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no  
man halt, or deaf, or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier  
body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single  
race, a single tongue—  
I have seen her far away—for is not  
Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every  
serpent passion kill'd,  
Every grim ravine a garden, every  
blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to  
either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her  
warless isles. 170

Warless? when her tens are thousands,  
and her thousands millions,  
then—

All her harvest all too narrow—who  
can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then.  
Will it ever? late or soon?

Can it, till this outworn earth be dead  
as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her.—  
On this day and at this hour,  
In this gap between the sandhills,  
whence you see the Locksley  
tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—  
Amy—sixty years ago—

She and I—the moon was falling  
greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and  
even where you see her now—  
Here we stood and claspt each other,  
swore the seeming-deathless  
vow.— 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights  
the hall, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and  
the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at  
this earthlier earth of ours,  
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of  
never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the  
Bringer home of all good  
things—  
All good things may move in Hesper,  
perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to  
that splendor or in Mars,  
We should see the globe we groan in,  
fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage,  
craft and madness, lust and  
spite,  
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that  
point of peaceful light? 190

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Might we not in glancing heavenward  
on a star so silver-fair,  
Yearn, and clasp the hands and mur-  
mur, 'Would to God that we  
were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, for-  
ward, in the immeasurable sea,  
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than  
can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of  
innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the  
planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in  
every peopled sphere?  
Well, be grateful for the sounding  
watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some  
ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolu-  
tion in the mud. <sup>200</sup>

What are men that He should heed us?  
cried the king of sacred song;  
Insects of an hour, that hourly work  
their brother insect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns  
along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them,  
flash a million miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before  
her highest, man, was born,  
Many an æon too may pass while earth  
is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—  
pools of salt, and plots of  
land—  
Shallow skin of green and azure—  
chains of mountain, grains of  
sand!

Only That which made us meant us to  
be mightier by and by, <sup>209</sup>  
Set the sphere of all the boundless  
heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the  
boundless, thro' the human  
soul;

Boundless inward in the atom, bound-  
less outward in the Whole.

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson,  
here the lion-guarded gate.

Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-  
morrow—you, you come so  
late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but  
wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a  
vicious boy!

Good, this forward, you that preach it,  
is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with  
Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul  
and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys  
Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by  
the thousand on the street. <sup>220</sup>

There the master scrimps his haggard  
sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the  
living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever  
creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the  
warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'Forward,'  
yours are hope and youth, but  
I—

Eighty winters leave the dog too lame  
to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and  
passing now into the night;  
Yet I would the rising race were half  
as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even? light  
the glimmer of the dawn? <sup>229</sup>  
Aged eyes may take the growing glim-  
mer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming  
changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest  
modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst,  
or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring  
this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how  
the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a  
backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson!  
Death and Silence hold their  
own.  
Leave the master in the first dark  
hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound  
and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion—  
youthful jealousy is a liar. <sup>240</sup>

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust  
the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you  
that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars  
yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never  
proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—  
Art and Grace are less and  
less:  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—  
roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old hostel left us where  
they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the  
'lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History,  
poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old  
political common-sense! <sup>250</sup>

Poor old voice of eighty crying after  
voices that have fled!  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my  
steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as  
the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all  
the hope of eighty years.

. . . . .

In this hostel—I remember—I repent  
it o'er his grave—  
Like a clown—by chance he met me—  
I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer  
mantles all the mouldering  
bricks—  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but  
a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from  
a day of driving showers—  
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like  
a flower among the flowers. <sup>260</sup>

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow,  
when they toll the chapel bell!  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wail-  
ing, 'I have loved thee well'?

Then a peal that shakes the portal—  
one has come to claim his  
bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her,  
shriek'd, and started from my  
side—

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use  
and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them,  
follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help  
his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage,  
raised the school, and drain'd  
the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd  
him? who shall swear it can-  
not be?

Earth would never touch her worst,  
were one in fifty such as he. <sup>270</sup>

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God  
must mingle with the game.

Nay, there may be those about us  
whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers  
of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in  
the fountains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a desert  
pathway, yours or mine.

Forward, till you see the Highest  
Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—  
for man can half-control his  
doom—

Till you find the deathless Angel  
seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly  
and mingle with the past.

I that loathed have come to love him.  
Love will conquer at the  
last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I  
and you will bear the pall;

Then I leave thee lord and master,  
latest lord of Locksley Hall.

### THE FLEET<sup>1</sup>

You, you, *if* you should fail to under-  
stand

What England is, and what her all-  
in-all,

On you will come the curse of all the  
land,

Should this old England fall

Which Nelson left so great.

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the

### II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power  
on earth,

Our own fair isle, the lord of every  
sea—

Her fuller franchise—what would that  
be worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—

Were she . . . a fallen state?

### III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so  
small,

Her island-myrriads fed from alien  
lands—

efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realized how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.<sup>2</sup>—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November, 1886.*

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;  
Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her fate.

## IV

You, you, that have the ordering of  
her fleet,

*If you should only compass her dis-  
grace,*

When all men starve, the wild mob's  
million feet

Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late.

# OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
PRINCE OF WALES

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!  
In your welfare we rejoice,  
Sons and brothers that have sent,  
From isle and cape and continent,  
Produce of your field and flood,  
Mount and mine, and primal wood;  
Works of subtle brain and hand,  
And splendors of the morning land,  
Gifts from every British zone,  
Britons, hold your own!

## II

May we find, as ages run,  
The mother featured in the son;  
And may yours for ever be  
That old strength and constancy  
Which has made your fathers great  
In our ancient island State,  
And wherever her flag fly,  
Glorying between sea and sky,  
Makes the might of Britain known;  
Britons, hold your own!

## III

Britain fought her sons of yore—  
Britain fail'd; and never more,  
Careless of our growing kin,

Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
Men that in a narrower day—  
Unprophetic rulers they—  
Drove from out the mother's nest  
That young eagle of the West  
To forage for herself alone;

Britons, hold your own!

## IV

Sharers of our glorious past,  
Brothers, must we part at last?  
Shall we not thro' good and ill  
Cleave to one another still?  
Britain's myriad voices call,  
'Sons, be welded each and all  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain, heart and soul!  
One life, one flag, one fleet, one  
throne!'

Britons, hold your own!

## TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night  
we part;  
Full-handed thunders often have  
confessed  
Thy power, well-used to move the  
public breast.  
We thank thee with our voice, and  
from the heart.  
Farewell, Macready, since this night  
we part,  
Go, take thine honors home; rank  
with the best,  
Garrick and statelier Kemble, and  
the rest  
Who made a nation purer through  
their art.  
Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
Nor flicker down to brainless pan-  
tomime,  
And those gilt gauds men-children  
swarm to see.  
Farewell, Macready, moral, grave,  
sublime;  
Our Shakespeare's bland and univer-  
sal eye  
Dwells pleased, through twice a  
hundred years, on thee.

DEMETER  
AND OTHER POEMS

TO THE MARQUIS OF  
DUFFERIN AND AVA

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and  
rash;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV

But since your name will grow with  
time,  
Not all, as honoring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the  
name  
A golden portal to my rhyme;

But more, that you and yours may  
know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI

For he—your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you—  
He fain had ranged her thro' and  
thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest  
youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening  
year,  
Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth;

VIII

Who might have chased and clasped  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here—and  
there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering  
down;

IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable,' he wrote,  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no  
more.

And sacred is the latest word;  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

## XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
 Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
 When That within the coffin fell,  
 Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

## XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
 And alien stars. To question why  
 The sons before the fathers die,  
 Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

## XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,  
 Nor settles into hueless gray,  
 My memories of his briefer day  
 Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN  
VICTORIA

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and  
 faded,  
 Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
 Since our Queen assumed the globe,  
 the sceptre.

## II

She beloved for a kindliness  
 Rare in fable or history,  
 Queen, and Empress of India,  
 Crown'd so long with a diadem  
 Never worn by a worthier,  
 Now with prosperous auguries  
 Comes at last to the bounteous  
 Crowning year of her Jubilee.

## III

Nothing of the lawless, of the despot,  
 Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
 All is gracious, gentle, great and  
 queenly.

You then joyfully, all of you,  
 Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
 Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
 Deck your houses, illuminate  
 All your towns for a festival,  
 And in each let a multitude  
 Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
 One full voice of allegiance,  
 Hail the fair Ceremonial  
 Of this year of her Jubilee.

Queen, as true to womanhood as  
 Queenhood,  
 Glorying in the glories of her people,  
 Sorrowing with the sorrows of the  
 lowest!

## VI

You, that wanton in affluence,  
 Spare not now to be bountiful,  
 Call your poor to regale with you,  
 All the lowly, the destitute,  
 Make their neighborhood health-  
 fuller,  
 Give your gold to the hospital,  
 Let the weary be comforted,  
 Let the needy be banqueted,  
 Let the maim'd in his heart re-  
 joice  
 At this glad Ceremonial,  
 And this year of her Jubilee.

## VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
 Gray with distance Edward's fifty  
 summers,  
 Even her Grandsire's fifty half for-  
 gotten.

## VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,  
 You that shape for eternity,  
 Raise a stately memorial,  
 Make it regally gorgeous,



## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

### IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing, 'Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

### XI

Are there thunders moaning in the distance?  
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,  
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

### TO PROFESSOR JEBB

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in you

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>1</sup>  
That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
As that which gilds the glebe of  
England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for a while,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

### DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies  
All night across the darkness, and at dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,  
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb  
With passing thro' at once from state to state,  
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,  
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,  
Might break thro' clouded memories once again<sup>10</sup>  
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song  
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,  
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,  
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away  
That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate, Persephone!

Queen of the dead no more—my child! Thine eyes  
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun

<sup>1</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,  
 And robed thee in his day from head to feet—  
 ‘Mother!’ and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion’d eyes  
 Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes  
 That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power  
 Draw downward into Hades with his drift  
 Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
 By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
 But when before have Gods or men beheld  
 The Life that had descended rearise,  
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?  
 So mighty was the mother’s childless cry,  
 A cry that rang thro’ Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
 The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
 With flowers that brighten as thy foot-step falls,  
 All flowers—but for one black blur of earth  
 Left by that closing chasm, thro’ which the car  
 Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee hence.  
 And here, my child, tho’ folded in thine arms,  
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
 Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence  
 The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,  
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,

And all at once their arch’d necks, midnight-maned,  
 Jet upward thro’ the midday blossom. No!  
 For, see, thy foot has touch’d it; all the space  
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,  
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour  
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,  
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
 Yea, the cubb’d lioness; went in search of thee  
 Thro’ many a palace, many a cot, and gave  
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
 And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole; and forth again  
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried:  
 ‘Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?’  
 And out from all the night an answer shrill’d,  
 ‘We know not, and we know not why we wail.’  
 I climb’d on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
 And ask’d the waves that moan about the world,  
 ‘Where? do ye make your moaning for my child?’  
 And round from all the world the voices came,  
 ‘We know not, and we know not why we moan.’  
 ‘Where?’ and I stared from every eagle-peak,  
 I thridded the black heart of all the woods,  
 I peer’d thro’ tomb and cave, and in the storms  
 Of autumn swept across the city, and heard  
 The murmur of their temples chanting me,

Me, me, the desolate mother!  
 'Where?'—and turn'd,  
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
 man,  
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief  
 for thee,—  
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd  
 hearth,  
 The serpent coil'd about his broken  
 shaft,  
 The scorpion crawling over naked  
 skulls;—  
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
 Spring from his fallen God, but trace  
 of thee  
 I saw not; and far on, and, following  
 out <sup>80</sup>  
 A league of labyrinthine darkness,  
 came  
 On three gray heads beneath a gleam-  
 ing rift.  
 'Where?' and I heard one voice from  
 all the three,  
 'We know not, for we spin the lives  
 of men,  
 And not of Gods, and know not why  
 we spin!  
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing  
 knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,  
 Without his knowledge, from him  
 flits to warn  
 A far-off friendship that he comes no  
 more,  
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard <sup>90</sup>  
 my cry,  
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thy-  
 self  
 Without thy knowledge, and thy  
 shadow past  
 Before me, crying, 'The Bright one in  
 the highest  
 Is brother of the Dark one in the low-  
 est,  
 And Bright and Dark have sworn that  
 I, the child  
 Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,  
 the Power  
 That lifts her buried life from gloom  
 to bloom,  
 Should be for ever and for evermore  
 The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.  
 Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the  
 Gods of heaven. <sup>100</sup>  
 I would not mingle with their feasts;  
 to me  
 Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on  
 the lips,  
 Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.  
 The man, that only lives and loves an  
 hour,  
 Seem'd nobler than their hard eterni-  
 ties.  
 My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
 ravings hush'd  
 The bird, and lost in utter grief I  
 fail'd  
 To send my life thro' olive-yard and  
 vine  
 And golden-grain, my gift to helpless  
 man  
 Rain-rotten died the wheat, the bar-  
 ley-spears <sup>110</sup>  
 Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and  
 the Sun,  
 Pale at my grief, drew down before  
 his time  
 Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter  
 snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-  
 ness, He  
 Who still is highest, glancing from his  
 height  
 On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
 miss'd  
 The wonted steam of sacrifice, the  
 praise  
 And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
 shouldst dwell  
 For nine white moons of each whole  
 year with me,  
 Three dark ones in the shadow with  
 thy king. <sup>120</sup>

Once more the reaper in the gleam  
 of dawn  
 Will see me by the landmark far  
 away,  
 Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk  
 Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
 Rejoicing in the harvest and the  
 grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-  
content  
With them who still are highest. Those  
gray heads,  
What meant they by their 'Fate be-  
yond the Fates'  
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us  
down,  
As we bore down the Gods before us?  
Gods, <sup>130</sup>  
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,  
to stay,  
Not spread the plague, the famine;  
Gods indeed,  
To send the noon into the night and  
break  
The sunless halls of Hades into  
Heaven?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the  
Sun,  
And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
When thou shalt dwell the whole  
bright year with me,  
And souls of men, who grew beyond  
their race,  
And made themselves as Gods against  
the fear  
Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast  
from men, <sup>140</sup>  
As Queen of Death, that worship  
which is Fear,  
Henceforth, as having risen from out  
the dead,  
Shalt ever send thy life along with  
mine  
From buried grain thro' springing  
blade, and bless  
Their garner'd autumn also, reap with  
me,  
Earth-Mother, in the harvest hymns  
of Earth  
The worship which is Love, and see  
no more  
The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glim-  
mering lawns  
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior  
glide <sup>150</sup>  
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD

NAăy, noă mander <sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin'  
'im Roă, Roă, Roă,  
Fur the dog 's stoăn-deăf, an' 'e 's  
blind, 'e can naither stan' nor  
goă.

But I meăns fur to maăke 'is owd aăge  
as 'appy as iver I can,  
Fur I owăs owd Roăver moor nor I  
iver owăd, mottal man.

Thou 's rode of 'is back when a  
babby, afoor thou was gotten  
too owd,  
Fur 'e 'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e  
was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e 'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e  
fowt; 'e could howd <sup>3</sup> 'is oăn,  
An' Roă was the dog as knaw'd when  
an' wheree to bury his boăne.

An' 'e kep his heăd hoop like a king,  
an' 'e 'd niver not down wi' 'is  
taăil,

Fur 'e 'd niver done nowt to be  
shaămed on, when we was i'  
Howlaby Daăle. <sup>10</sup>

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,  
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be  
deăd,

I thinks as I 'd like fur to hev soom  
sort of a sarvice reăd.

Fur 'e 's moor good sense na the Par-  
liament man 'at stans fur us  
'ere,

An' I 'd voăt fur 'im, my oăn sen, if 'e  
could but stan' for the Shere.

'Faăithful an' True'—them words be  
i' Scriptur—an' Faăithful an'  
True

Ull be fun' <sup>4</sup> upo' four short legs ten  
times fur one upo' two.

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover.

<sup>3</sup> Hold.

<sup>2</sup> Manner.

<sup>4</sup> Found.

An' maäybe they 'll walk upo' two, but  
I knaws they runs upo'  
four,<sup>1</sup>—

Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha  
'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when  
we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,  
Ten year sin'—Naäy—naäy! tha mun  
nobbut hev' one glass of  
aäle. 20

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>2</sup> the 'ouse,  
an' belt<sup>3</sup> long afoor my daäy,  
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>4</sup>  
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs,  
'ud coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo' stools to pic-  
tur the door-poorch theree,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stan-  
nin' theree o' the brokken  
stick; <sup>5</sup>

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin' <sup>6</sup> as  
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night—but  
it 's down, an' all on it now  
Goän into mangles an' tonups,<sup>7</sup> an'  
raäved slick thruf by the  
plow—

Theree, when the 'ouse wur a house,  
one night I wur sittin' aloän,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an'  
sleeäpin' still as a stoän, 30

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowd as  
this, an' the midders<sup>8</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop  
wi' the windle<sup>9</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin' alongside  
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,  
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—  
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi'  
the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,  
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was  
nobbut three, an' noän on 'em  
theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the  
Ghoäst an' duss n't not sleeäp  
i' the 'ouse,  
But, Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>1</sup>  
was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst<sup>2</sup> at the night,  
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,  
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like  
a long black snaäke i' the  
snaw, 40

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw  
slushin' down fro' the bank to  
the beck,  
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I  
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'  
the good owd times 'at was  
goän,  
An' the munney they maäde by the  
war, an' the times 'at was  
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin'  
to let in furriners' wheät,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan'  
ageän o' their feeät?

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'  
to paäy my men?  
An' all along o' the feller<sup>3</sup> as turn'd  
'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us,  
we could n't ha' 'eärd tha call,

<sup>1</sup> 'Moästlins,' for the most part, gener-  
ally.

<sup>2</sup> Once.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in 'house.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

<sup>3</sup> Built.

<sup>4</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

<sup>5</sup> On a staff *ragulé*.

<sup>6</sup> Ivy.

<sup>7</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

<sup>8</sup> Meadows.

<sup>9</sup> Drifted snow.

Sa moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha  
down, an' thy craädle an'  
all; 50

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha  
then 'ed gotten wer läve,  
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by  
cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when  
moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an'  
the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my  
'ead,

Till I dreämed 'at Squire walkt in, an'  
I says to him, 'Squire, ya 're  
lääte,'

Then I seed 'at 'is faäce wur as red as  
the Yule-block theree i' the  
graäte.

An' 'e says, 'Can ya pääy me the rent  
to-night?' an' I says to 'im,  
'Noä,'

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my  
hairm,<sup>1</sup> 'Then hout to-night  
tha shall goä.'

'Tha 'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin' ma  
hout upo' Christmas Eäve?'

Then I waäked an' I fun it was  
Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my  
sleäve. 60

An' I thowt as 'e 'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>2</sup>  
fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is in-  
tent;

An' I says, 'Git awaäy, ya beast,' an'  
I fetcht 'im a kick, an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd  
'im, as if 'e 'd 'a brokken 'is  
neck,

An' I 'd cleär forgot, little Dicky,  
thy chaumber door would n't  
sneck;<sup>3</sup>

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my  
hairm hingin' down to the  
floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin'  
an' teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

<sup>1</sup> Arm.

<sup>2</sup> Mad.

<sup>3</sup> Latch.

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but  
I kick'd thy moother istead.  
'What arta snorin' theree fur? the  
house is afire,' she said.

Thy moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about  
the gell o' the farm,  
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong  
when there warn't not a mos-  
sel o' harm; 70

An' she did n't not solidly meän I wur  
gawin' that waäy to the bad,  
Fur the gell<sup>1</sup> was as howry a trollope  
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But moother was free of 'er tongue, as  
I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she  
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, 'I 'd be good to tha, Bess, if  
tha'd onywaäys let ma be  
good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the  
chair, an' screeäd like a howl  
gone wud 2—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>3</sup> Git oop,  
if ya 're onywaäys good for  
owt.'

And I says, 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not  
nowadaäys—good fur nowt—

'Yit I beänt sich a nowt<sup>4</sup> of all nowts  
as 'ull hallus do as 'e 's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then  
I seed 'er a-cryin', I did. 80

An' she beäld, 'Ya mun saäve little  
Dick, an' be sharp about it an'  
all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'  
sets 'im ageän the wall.

<sup>1</sup> 'The girl was as dirty a slut as ever  
trudged in the mud,' but there is a sense  
of slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is  
not expressed in 'trudged.'

<sup>2</sup> 'She half overturned me and shrieked  
like an owl gone mad.'

<sup>3</sup> Ladder.

<sup>4</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person.

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder  
hin, when I gits to the top,  
But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till  
I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy moother was howdin' the lether,  
an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,  
An' I was n't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-  
waäys as I was n't afeärd;

But I could n't see fur the smoäke  
where thou was a-liggin, my  
lad,

An' Roäver was theree i' the chaum-  
ber a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like  
mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an'  
a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it was n't a bite but a burn, fur  
the merk 's<sup>1</sup> o' thy shou'der  
yit; 90

Then I call'd out, 'Roä, Roä, Roä,'  
thaw I did n't haäfe think as 'e  
'd 'ear,

*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my  
bairn i' 'is mouth to the winder  
theree!*

He coom'd like a hangel o' marcy as  
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,  
Or like tother hangel i' Scriptur 'at  
summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an  
'e promised a son to she,  
An' Roä was as good as the hangel i  
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, 'I  
mun gaw up ageän fur Roä.'  
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I  
tell'd 'er, 'Yeäs, I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder,  
an' clemm'd<sup>2</sup> owd Roä by the  
'eäd, 99

An' is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an'  
I taäked 'im at fust fur deä;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein',  
an' seeäm'd as blind as a poop,  
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>1</sup> I  
could n't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to  
the barn, fur the barn would  
n't burn

Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother  
waäy, an' the wind was n't like  
to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e wag-  
gled 'is taäil fur a bit,  
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an'  
crawin' all night, an' I 'ears 'em  
yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round,  
and thou was a-squeälin' thy-  
sen,

An' moother was naggin' an' groänin'  
an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>2</sup>  
rummle down when the roof  
gev waäy.

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin'  
an' roarin' like judgment  
daäy. 110

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the  
barn was as cowl as owt,  
An' we cuddled and huddled together,  
an' happt wersens<sup>3</sup> oop as we  
mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but moother  
'ed beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw  
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when  
the rig-tree<sup>4</sup> was tummlin'  
in—

Too laäte—but it 's all ower now—  
hall hower—an' ten year sin';

<sup>1</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

<sup>2</sup> Beams.

<sup>3</sup> Wrapt ourselves.

<sup>4</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of  
the house just beneath the ridge.

<sup>1</sup> Mark.

<sup>2</sup> Clutched.

## VASTNESS

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but  
 I 'll coom an' I 'll squench the  
 light,  
**Fur** we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—  
 and soä, little Dick, good-  
 night.

## VASTNESS

**MANY** a hearth upon our dark globe  
 sighs after many a vanish'd  
 face,  
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll  
 with the dust of a vanish'd  
 race.

### II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this  
 poor earth's pale history  
 runs,—  
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in  
 the gleam of a million million  
 of suns?

### III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,  
 truthless violence mourn'd by  
 the wise,  
 Thousands of voices drowning his own  
 in a popular torrent of lies  
 upon lies;

### IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glori-  
 ous annals of army and fleet,  
**Death** for the right cause, death for  
 the wrong cause, trumpets of  
 victory, groans of defeat;

Innocence seethed in her mother's  
 milk, and Charity setting the  
 martyr aflame;  
**Thralldom** who walks with the banner  
 of Freedom, and recks not to  
 ruin a realm in her name.

### VI

**Faith** at her zenith, or all but lost in  
 the gloom of doubts that  
 darken the schools;  
**Craft** with a bunch of all-heal in her  
 hand, follow'd up by her vassa'  
 legion of fools;

### VII

**Trade** flying over a thousand seas with  
 her spice and her vintage, her  
 silk and her corn;  
**Desolate** offing, sailorless harbors,  
 famishing populace, wharves  
 forlorn;

### VIII

**Star** of the morning, **Hope** in the sun-  
 rise; gloom of the evening,  
 Life at a close;  
**Pleasure** who flaunts on her wide  
 downway with her flying robe  
 and her poison'd rose;

### IX

**Pain**, that has crawl'd from the corpse  
 of **Pleasure**, a worm which  
 writhes all day, and at night  
**Stirs** up again in the heart of the  
 sleeper, and stings him back to  
 the curse of the light;

**Wealth** with his wines and his wedded  
 harlots; honest **Poverty**, bare  
 to the bone;  
**Opulent Avarice**, lean as **Poverty**;  
 Flattery gilding the rift in a  
 throne;

### XI

**Fame** blowing out from her golden  
 trumpet a jubilant challenge to  
 Time and to Fate;  
**Slander**, her shadow, sowing the  
 nettle on all the laurell'd  
 graves of the great;



## XII

Love, for the maiden, crown'd with  
marriage, no regrets for aught  
that has been,  
Household happiness, gracious chil-  
dren, debtless competence,  
golden mean;

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations,  
and pigmy spites of the village  
spire;  
Vows that will last to the last death-  
ruckle, and vows that are snapt  
in a moment of fire;

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the  
minute, and died in the doing  
it, flesh without mind;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the  
Cross, till Self died out in the  
love of his kind;

## xv

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revo-  
lutions of earth;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire—  
change of the tide—what is all  
of it worth?

## XVI

What the philosophies, all the sci-  
ences, poesy, varying voices of  
prayer,  
All that is noblest, all that is basest,  
all that is filthy with all that is  
fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but  
in being our own corpse-coffins  
at last?  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a  
meaningless Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the  
gloom, or a moment's anger of  
bees in their hive?—

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and  
love him for ever: the dead are  
not dead but alive.

## THE RING

DEDICATED TO THE  
HON. J. RUSSELL LOWELL

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*)

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Gloving honey moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night. 10  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new? 20

FATHER

And who was he with such love-  
drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons  
of one?

MIRIAM

The prophet of his own, my Hubert—  
his

## THE RING

The words, and mine the setting. 'Air  
and words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song,  
'are bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you?

FATHER

Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your mother's voice in  
yours.  
She—, why, you shiver tho' the wind  
is west  
With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM

Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a  
breath that past <sup>30</sup>  
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*)

Even so.  
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that  
once was Man,  
But cannot wholly free itself from  
Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the  
veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the  
dark.  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,  
for man,  
But thro' the Will of One who knows  
and rules—  
And utter knowledge is but utter  
love— <sup>40</sup>

Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the spheres—and ever open-  
ing height,  
An ever lessening earth—and she per-  
haps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly  
link  
With me to-day.

MIRIAM

You speak so low; what is it?  
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a  
new link  
Breaking an old one?

FATHER

No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-  
all.

MIRIAM

And you the lifelong guardian of the  
child.

FATHER

I, and one other whom you have not  
known. 50

MIRIAM

And who? what other?

FATHER

Whither are you bound?  
For Naples which we only left in  
May?

MIRIAM

No, father, Spain, but Hubert brings  
me home  
With April and the swallow. Wish me  
joy!

FATHER

What need to wish when Hubert weds  
in you  
The heart of love, and you the soul of  
truth  
In Hubert?

MIRIAM

Tho' you used to call me once  
The lonely maiden princess of the  
wood,  
Who meant to sleep her hundred sum-  
mers out  
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER

Ay, but now <sup>60</sup>  
Your fairy prince has found you, take  
this ring.

MIRIAM

'Io t' amo'—and these diamonds—  
beautiful!  
'From Walter,' and for me from you  
then?

FATHER

One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM

Miriam am I not?

FATHER

This ring bequeath'd you by your  
mother, child  
Was to be given you—such her dying  
wish—  
Given on the morning when you came  
of age  
Or on the day you married. Both the  
days  
Now close in one. The ring is doubly  
yours  
Why do you look so gravely at the  
tower? 70

MIRIAM

I never saw it yet so all ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pin-  
nacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!  
And how the birds that circle round  
the tower  
Are cheeping to each other of their  
flight  
To summer lands!

FATHER

And that has made you grave?  
Fly—care not. Birds and brides must  
leave the nest.  
Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM

It is not that!

FATHER

What else? 80

MIRIAM

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER

What chamber, child?  
Your nurse is here?

MIRIAM

My mother's nurse and mine.  
She comes to dress me in my bridal  
veil.

FATHER

What did she say?

MIRIAM

She said that you and I  
Had been abroad for my poor health  
so long  
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
ask'd  
About my mother, and she said, 'Thy  
hair  
Is golden like thy mother's, not so  
fine.'

FATHER

What then? what more?

MIRIAM

She said—perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now so  
far 90  
Beyond the common date of death—  
that you,  
When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear mother on your bracket  
here—

You took me to that chamber in the  
 tower,  
 The topmost—a chest there, by which  
 you knelt—  
 And there were books and dresses—  
 left to me,  
 A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she  
 said,  
 I babbled, 'Mother, mother'—as I  
 used  
 To prattle to her picture—stretch'd  
 my hands  
 As if I saw her; then a woman came  
 And caught me from my nurse. I hear  
 her yet—<sup>101</sup>  
 A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER

Garrulous old crone!

MIRIAM

Poor nurse!

FATHER

I bade her keep,  
 Like a seal'd book, all mention of the  
 ring,  
 For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM

'She too might speak to-day,' she  
 mumbled. Still,  
 I scarce have learnt the title of your  
 book,  
 But you will turn the pages.

FATHER

Ay, to-day!  
 I brought you to that chamber on your  
 third  
 September birthday with your nurse,  
 and felt<sup>110</sup>  
 An icy breath play on me, while I  
 stoopt  
 To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM

It's amo'?

This very ring,

FATHER

Yes, for some wild hope was mine  
 That, in the misery of my married life,  
 Miriam your mother might appear to  
 me.  
 She came to you, not me. The storm  
 you hear  
 Far-off is Muriel—your stepmother's  
 voice.

MIRIAM

Vext, that you thought my mother  
 came to me?  
 Or at my crying, 'Mother'? or to find  
 My mother's diamonds hidden from  
 her there,<sup>120</sup>  
 Like worldly beauties in the cell, not  
 shown  
 To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER

Wait a while.  
 Your mother and stepmother—Mir-  
 iam Erne  
 And Muriel Erne—the two were cous-  
 ins—lived  
 With Muriel's mother on the down,  
 that sees  
 A thousand squares of corn and mead-  
 ow, far  
 As the gray deep, a landscape which  
 your eyes  
 Have many a time ranged over when  
 a babe.

MIRIAM

I climb'd the hill with Hubert, yester-  
 day,  
 And from the thousand squares, one  
 silent voice<sup>130</sup>  
 Came on the wind, and seem'd to say,  
 'Again.'  
 We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
 Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER

And there  
 I found these cousins often by the  
 brook,

For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel  
 threw the fly;  
 The girls of equal age, but one was  
 fair,  
 And one was dark, and both were  
 beautiful.  
 No voice for either spoke within my  
 heart  
 Then, for the surface eye, that only  
 dotes  
 On outward beauty, glancing from the  
 one 140  
 To the other, knew not that which  
 pleased it most,  
 The raven ringlet or the gold; but  
 both  
 Were dowerless, and myself, I used to  
 walk  
 This terrace—morbid, melancholy;  
 mine  
 And yet not mine the hall, the farm,  
 the field;  
 For all that ample woodland whis-  
 per'd, 'Debt,'  
 The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-  
 mur'd, 'Debt,'  
 And in yon arching avenue of old  
 elms,  
 Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
 rook  
 And carrion crow cry, 'Mortgage.'

## MIRIAM

Father's fault 150  
 Visited on the children!

## FATHER

Ay, but then  
 A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
 Rome—  
 He left me wealth—and while I jour-  
 ney'd hence,  
 And saw the world fly by me like a  
 dream,  
 And while I communed with my truest  
 self,  
 I woke to all of truest in myself,  
 Till, in the gleam of those midsummer  
 dawns,  
 The form of Muriel faded, and the  
 face

Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;  
 And past and future mixt in heaven  
 and made 160  
 The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

## MIRIAM

So glad? no tear for him who left you  
 wealth,  
 Your kinsman?

## FATHER

I had seen the man but once;  
 He loved my name, not me; and then  
 I pass'd  
 Home, and thro' Venice, where a jew-  
 eller,  
 So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
 That he was nearing his own hundred,  
 sold  
 This ring to me, then laugh'd, 'The  
 ring is weird.'  
 And weird and worn and wizard-like  
 was he.  
 'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he said,  
 'The souls 170  
 Of two repentant lovers guard the  
 ring;'  
 Then with a ribald twinkle in his  
 bleak eyes—  
 'And if you give the ring to any maid,  
 They still remember what it cost  
 them here,  
 And bind the maid to love you by the  
 ring;  
 And if the ring were stolen from the  
 maid,  
 The theft were death or madness to  
 the thief,  
 So sacred those ghost lovers hold the  
 gift.'  
 And then he told their legend:  
 'Long ago  
 Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
 Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
 sent 181  
 This ring, "Io t' amo," to his best be-  
 loved,  
 And sent it on her birthday. She in  
 wrath  
 Return'd it on her birthday, and that  
 day

His death-day, when, half-frenzied by  
the ring,  
He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The causer of that scandal, fought and  
fell;  
And she that came to part them all too  
late,  
And found a corpse and silence, drew  
the ring  
From his dead finger, wore it till her  
death,<sup>190</sup>  
Shrined him within the temple of her  
heart,  
Made every moment of her after life  
A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,  
and cried,  
"I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo."

## MIRIAM

Legend or true? so tender should be  
true!  
Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

## FATHER

Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren  
ghost  
From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd—  
A hollow laughter!

## MIRIAM

Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death!<sup>201</sup>  
But you?

## FATHER

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this  
ring  
Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the  
heart  
Of Miriam; then I bade the man en-  
grave  
'From Walter' on the ring, and sent it  
—wrote  
Name, surname, all as clear as noon.  
but he—

Some younger hand must have en-  
graven the ring—  
His fingers were so stiffen'd by the  
frost  
Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
scrawl'd<sup>210</sup>  
A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Mu-  
riel';  
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what  
I meant  
For Miriam, took the ring, and  
flaunted it  
Before that other whom I loved and  
love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a min-  
ster there,  
A galleried palace, or a battle-field,  
Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—  
coming home—  
And on your mother's birthday—all  
but yours—  
A week betwixt—and when the tower  
as now  
Was all ablaze with crimson to the  
roof,<sup>220</sup>  
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
Head-foremost—who were those that  
stood between  
The tower and that rich phantom of  
the tower?  
Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and  
like  
May-blossoms in mid-autumn—was it  
they?  
A light shot upward on them from the  
lake.  
What sparkled there? whose hand was  
that? they stood  
So close together. I am not keen of  
sight,  
But coming nearer—Muriel had the  
ring—  
'O Miriam! have you given your ring  
to her?'<sup>230</sup>  
O Miriam! Miriam redden'd, Muriel  
clench'd  
The hand that wore it, till I cried  
again:  
'O Miriam, if you love me take the  
ring!'  
She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was  
mute.

'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'  
 Then—Muriel standing ever statue-  
 like—  
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial  
 way  
 And saying gently, 'Muriel, by your  
 leave,  
 Unclosed the hand and from it drew  
 the ring,  
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down  
 her own, <sup>240</sup>  
 To t' amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.

## MIRIAM

Poor Muriel!

## FATHER

Ay, poor Muriel, when you hear  
 What follows! Miriam loved me from  
 the first,  
 Not thro' the ring; but on her mar-  
 riage-morn  
 This birthday, death-day, and be-  
 trothal ring,  
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;  
 And after hours of search and doubt  
 and threats,  
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
 'See!—  
 Found in a chink of that old mould-  
 er'd floor!'  
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying  
 smile, <sup>250</sup>  
 As who should say that 'those who lose  
 can find.'  
 Then I and she were married for a  
 year,  
 One year without a storm, or even a  
 cloud;  
 And you, my Miriam, born within the  
 year;  
 And she, my Miriam, dead within the  
 year.  
 I sat beside her dying, and she  
 gaspt:  
 'The books, the miniature, the lace  
 are hers,  
 My ring too when she comes of age,  
 or when  
 She marries; you—you loved me, kept  
 your word.

You love me still, "To t' amo."—Mu-  
 riel—no— <sup>260</sup>  
 She cannot love; she loves her own  
 hard self,  
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Prom-  
 ise me,  
 Miriam, not Muriel—she shall have  
 the ring.'  
 And there the light of other life, which  
 lives  
 Beyond our burial and our buried  
 eyes,  
 Gleam'd for a moment in her own on  
 earth.  
 I swore the vow, then with my latest  
 kiss  
 Upon them, closed her eyes, which  
 would not close,  
 But kept their watch upon the ring  
 and you.  
 Your birthday was her death-day.

## MIRIAM

O poor mother! <sup>270</sup>  
 And you, poor desolate father, and  
 poor me,  
 The little senseless, worthless, word-  
 less babe,  
 Saved when your life was wreck'd!

## FATHER

Desolate? yes!  
 Desolate as that sailor whom the  
 storm  
 Had parted from his comrade in the  
 boat,  
 And dash'd half dead on barren sands,  
 was I.  
 Nay, you were my one solace; only—  
 you  
 Were always ailing. Muriel's mother,  
 sent,  
 And sure am I, by Muriel, one day  
 came  
 And saw you, shook her head, and  
 patted yours, <sup>280</sup>  
 And smiled, and making with a kindly  
 pinch  
 Each poor pale cheek a momentary  
 rose—

'should be fix'd,' she said; your  
 pretty bud,  
 So blighted here, would flower into  
 full health  
 Among our health and bracken. Let  
 her come!  
 And we will feed her with our moun-  
 tain air,  
 And send her home to you rejoicing.'  
 No—  
 We could not part. And once, when  
 you, my girl,  
 Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny  
 fist  
 Had graspt a daisy from your  
 mother's grave—<sup>290</sup>  
 By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'Among the tombs in this damp vale  
 of yours!  
 You scorn my mother's warning, but  
 the child  
 Is paler than before. We often walk  
 In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
 The mist of autumn gather from your  
 lake,  
 And shroud the tower; and once we  
 only saw  
 Your gilded vane, a light above the  
 mist'—  
 Our old bright bird that still is veer-  
 ing there  
 Above his four gold letters—'and the  
 light,'<sup>300</sup>  
 She said, 'was like that light'—and  
 there she paused,  
 And long; till I, believing that the  
 girl's  
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not  
 find  
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
 her two—  
 'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
 war'—  
 'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
 The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she  
 said, 'the light  
 That glimmers on the marsh and on  
 the grave.'  
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
 past away.  
 Miriam, I am not surely one of  
 those<sup>310</sup>

Caught by the flower that closes on  
 the fly,  
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd in-  
 tent,  
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
 To strike it, struck. I took, I left you  
 there;  
 I came, I went, was happier day by  
 day;  
 For Muriel nursed you with a mother's  
 care;  
 Till on that clear and heather-scented  
 height  
 The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
 bloom.  
 She always came to meet me carrying  
 you,  
 And all her talk was of the babe she  
 loved;<sup>320</sup>  
 So, following her old pastime of the  
 brook,  
 She threw the fly for me; but oftener  
 left  
 That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's  
 health  
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
 Strange!  
 She used to shun the wailing babe, and  
 dotes  
 On this of yours.' But when the ma-  
 tron saw  
 That hinted love was only wasted bait,  
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever  
 since  
 You sent the fatal ring'—I told her  
 'sent  
 To 'Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever  
 since'<sup>330</sup>  
 In all the world my dear one sees but  
 you—  
 In your sweet babe she finds but you  
 —she makes  
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but  
 you.'  
 And then the tear fell, the voice broke  
 Her heart!  
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
 Who sees his face in water, and a  
 stone,  
 That glances from the bottom of the  
 pool,  
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet  
 at last,



Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep  
So skilled a nurse about you always—  
    nay! <sup>340</sup>

Some half remorseful kind of pity  
    too—

Well! well, you know I married Mu-  
    riel Erne.

‘I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
    wife’—

I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
    child—

When all at once with some electric  
    thrill

A cold air pass’d between us, and the  
    hands

Fell from each other, and were join’d  
    again.

No second cloudless honeymoon  
    was mine.

For by and by she sicken’d of the  
    farce,

She dropt the gracious mask of moth-  
    erhood, <sup>350</sup>

She came no more to meet me, carry-  
    ing you,

Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,

Nor ever cheer’d you with a kindly  
    smile,

Nor ever ceased to clamor for the  
    ring;

Why had I sent the ring at first to  
    her?

Why had I made her love me thro’ the  
    ring,

And then had changed? so fickle are  
    men—the best!

Not she—but now my love was hers  
    again,

The ring by right, she said, was hers  
    again. <sup>360</sup>

At times too shrilling in her angrier  
    moods,

‘That weak and watery nature love  
    you? No!

“*Io t’ amo, Io t’ amo!*”! flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her  
    lips

Were warm upon my cheek, an icy  
    breath,

As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow;

But still she made her outcry for the  
    ring;

For one monotonous fancy madden’d  
    her, <sup>370</sup>

Till I myself was madden’d with her  
    cry,

And even that ‘*Io t’ amo,*’ those three  
    sweet

Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with  
    eerie sounds,

A footstep, a low throbbing in the  
    walls,

A noise of falling weights that never  
    fell,

Weird whispers, bells that rang with-  
    out a hand,

Door-handles turn’d when none was  
    at the door,

And bolted doors that open’d of them-  
    selves;

And one betwixt the dark and light  
    had seen <sup>380</sup>

*Her*, bending by the cradle of her  
    babe.

#### MIRIAM

And I remember once that being  
    waked

By noises in the house—and no one  
    near—

I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle  
    hand

Fall on my forehead, and a sudden  
    face

Look’d in upon me like a gleam and  
    pass’d,

And I was quieted, and slept again.  
Or is it some half memory of a dream?

#### FATHER

Your fifth September birthday.

#### MIRIAM

    And the face,  
The hand,—my mother.

#### FATHER

    Miriam, on that day  
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous  
    tale— <sup>391</sup>

Mere want of gold—and still for  
twenty years

Bound by the golden cord of their first  
love—

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to  
share

Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler  
then

Than ever you were in your cradle,  
moan'd,

'I am fitter for my bed, or for my  
grave,

I cannot go, go you.' And then she  
rose,

She clung to me with such a hard em-  
brace, <sup>399</sup>

So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
I parted from her, and I went alone.

And when the bridegroom murmur'd,  
'With this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the  
key,

The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.  
I kept it as a sacred amulet

About me,—gone! and gone in that  
embrace!

Then, hurrying home, I found her not  
in house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air  
Fled by me.—There, the chest was  
open—all

The sacred relics tost about the floor—  
Among them Muriel lying on her  
face— <sup>411</sup>

I raised her, call'd her, 'Muriel, Mu-  
riel, wake!'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed  
eye

Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I  
took

And chafed the freezing hand. A red  
mark ran

All round one finger pointed straight,  
the rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and  
maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn  
the ring—

Then torn it from her finger, or as  
if—

For never had I seen her show re-  
morse—

As if—

MIRIAM

—those two ghost lovers—

FATHER

Lovers yet—

MIRIAM

Yes, yes!

FATHER

—but dead so long, gone up so far,  
That now their ever-rising life has  
dwarf'd

Or lost the moment of their past on  
earth,

As we forget our wail at being born—  
As if—

MIRIAM

—a dearer ghost had—

FATHER

—wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM

Had floated in with sad reproachful  
eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn  
the ring

In fright, and fallen dead. And I my-  
self <sup>431</sup>

Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER

Well, no more!

No bridal music this! but fear not  
you!

You have the ring she guarded; that  
poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her  
free,

Except that, still drawn downward for  
an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church,  
where she

Was married too, may linger, till she  
 sees  
 Her maiden coming like a queen, who  
 leaves  
 Some colder province in the North to  
 gain  
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
 Clash welcome—linger, till her own,  
 the babe <sup>440</sup>  
 She lean'd to from her spiritual sphere  
 Her lonely maiden princess, crowned  
 with flowers,  
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-  
 world  
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me, child,  
 and go.

## FORLORN

## I

He is fled—I wish him dead—  
 He that wrought my ruin—  
 O, the flattery and the craft  
 Which were my undoing—  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the storms are blowing.

## II

'Who was witness of the crime?  
 Who shall now reveal it?  
 He is fled, or he is dead,  
 Marriage will conceal it—  
 In the night, in the night,  
 While the gloom is growing.'

## III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
 What is this you 're dreaming?  
 There is laughter down in hell  
 At your simple scheming—  
 In the night, O, the night!  
 When the ghosts are fleeting.

## IV

You to place a hand in his  
 Like an honest woman's,

You that lie with wasted lungs  
 Waiting for your summons—  
 In the night, O, the night!  
 O, the deathwatch beating!

There will come a witness soon  
 Hard to be confuted,  
 All the world will hear a voice  
 Scream you are polluted—  
 In the night! O, the night,  
 When the owls are wailing!

## VI

Shame and marriage, shame and mar-  
 riage,  
 Fright and foul dissembling,  
 Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
 Tower and altar trembling—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 When the mind is failing!

## VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
 How your hand is shaking!  
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
 What is this you 're taking?—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the house is sleeping.

## VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
 O unhappy creature?  
 You that would not tread on a worm  
 For your gentle nature—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 O, the night of weeping!

## IX

Murder would not veil your sin,  
 Marriage will not hide it,  
 Earth and Hell will brand your name,  
 Wretch, you must abide it—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 Long before the dawning.

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
 Tell him you were lying!

## HAPPY

Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
 You that know you 're dying—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the grave is yawning.

### XI

No—you will not die before,  
 Tho' you 'll ne'er be stronger;  
 You will live till *that* is born,  
 Then a little longer—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 While the Fiend is prowling.

### XII

Death and marriage, death and marriage!  
 Funeral hearses rolling!  
 Black with bridal favors mixt!  
 Bridal bells with tolling!—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 When the wolves are howling.

### XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,  
 Tell him now or never!  
 Tell him all before you die,  
 Lest you die for ever—  
 In the night, O, the night,  
 Where there 's no forgetting.

### XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
 All her tale of sadness,  
 Blister'd every word with tears,  
 And eased her heart of madness—  
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
 And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY

### THE LEPER'S BRIDE

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and  
 what is it that you fear?  
 Is he sick, your mate, like mine?  
 have you lost him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his  
 watch beside the mere,  
 And flies above the leper's hut,  
 where lives the living-dead.

### II

Come back, nor let me know it! would  
 he live and die alone?  
 And has he not forgiven me yet, his  
 overjealous bride,  
 Who am, and was, and will be, his own  
 and only own,  
 To share his living death with him,  
 die with him side by side?

### III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary  
 moor,  
 Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn  
 and wears the leper's weed? <sup>16</sup>  
 The door is open. He! is he standing  
 at the door,  
 My soldier of the Cross? it is he,  
 and he indeed!

### IV

My roses—will he take them *now*—  
 mine, his—from off the tree  
 We planted both together, happy in  
 our marriage morn?  
 O God, I could blaspheme, for he  
 fought Thy fight for Thee,  
 And Thou hast made him leper to  
 compass him with scorn—

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
 coward and the base,  
 And set a crueller mark than Cain's  
 on him, the good and brave!  
 He sees me, waves me from him. I will  
 front him face to face.  
 You need not wave me from you. I  
 would leap into your grave. <sup>20</sup>

### VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of  
 the conquering sword,

The roses that you cast aside—once  
 more I bring you these.  
 No nearer? do you scorn me when you  
 tell me, O my lord,  
 You would not mar the beauty of  
 your bride with your disease.

## VII

You say your body is so foul—then  
 here I stand apart,  
 Who yearn to lay my loving head  
 upon your leprous breast.  
 The leper plague may scale my skin,  
 but never taint my heart;  
 Your body is not foul to me, and  
 body is foul at best.

## VIII

I loved you first when young and fair,  
 but now I love you most;  
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on  
 which the worm will feast; 30  
 This poor rib-grated dungeon of the  
 holy human ghost,  
 This house with all its hateful needs  
 no cleaner than the beast,

## IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which  
 in Eden was divine,  
 This Satan-haunted ruin, this little  
 city of sewers,  
 This wall of solid flesh that comes be-  
 tween your soul and mine,  
 Will vanish and give place to the  
 beauty that endures,

'The beauty that endures on the Spirit-  
 ual height,  
 When we shall stand transfigured,  
 like Christ on Hermon hill,  
 And moving each to music, soul in soul  
 and light in light,  
 Shall flash thro' one another in a  
 moment as we will. 40

## XI

Foul! foul! the word was yours not  
 mine, I worship that right hand  
 Which fell'd the foes before you as  
 the woodman fells the wood,  
 And sway'd the sword that lighten'd  
 back the sun of Holy Land,  
 And clove the Moslem crescent  
 moon, and changed it into  
 blood.

## XII

And once I worshipt all too well this  
 creature of decay,  
 For age will chink the face, and  
 death will freeze the supplest  
 limbs—  
 Yet you in your mid manhood—O,  
 the grief when yesterday  
 They bore the Cross before you to  
 the chant of funeral hymns!

## XIII

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the  
 Psalm, and when  
 The priest pronounced you dead,  
 and flung the mould upon your  
 feet, 50  
 A beauty came upon your face, not  
 that of living men,  
 But seen upon the silent brow when  
 life has ceased to beat.

## XIV

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not  
 one was there  
 Who saw you kneel beside your  
 bier, and weeping scarce could  
 see;  
 May I come a little nearer, I that  
 heard, and changed the prayer  
 And sang the married 'nos' for the  
 solitary 'me'?

## XV

My beauty marred by you? by you! so  
 be it. All is well

If I lose it and myself in the higher  
 beauty, yours.  
*My* beauty lured that falcon from his  
 eyry on the fell,  
 Who never caught one gleam of the  
 beauty which endures—<sup>60</sup>

## XVI

The Count who sought to snap the  
 bond that link'd us life to life,  
 Who whisper'd me, 'Your Ulric  
 loves'—a little nearer still—  
 He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,  
 your Ulric woos my wife'—  
 A lie by which he thought he could  
 subdue me to his will.

## XVII

I knew that you were near me when I  
 let him kiss my brow;  
*Did* he touch me on the lips? I was  
 jealous, anger'd, vain,  
 And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are  
 you jealous of me now?  
 Your pardon, O my love, if I ever  
 gave you pain!

## XVIII

You never once accused me, but I  
 wept alone, and sigh'd  
 In the winter of the present for the  
 summer of the past;<sup>70</sup>  
 That icy winter silence—how it froze  
 you from your bride,  
 Tho' I made one barren effort to  
 break it at the last!

## XIX

I brought you, you remember, these  
 roses, when I knew  
 You were parting for the war, and  
 you took them tho' you  
 frown'd;  
 You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.  
 All at once the trumpet blew,  
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse,  
 and you hurl'd them to the  
 ground.

## XX

You parted for the Holy War without  
 a word to me,  
 And clear myself unask'd—not I.  
 My nature was too proud.  
 And him I saw but once again, and far  
 away was he,<sup>70</sup>  
 When I was praying in a storm—  
 the crash was long and loud—

## XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt  
 from falling on your head—  
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was  
 coming down the fell—  
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire  
 from heaven had dash'd him  
 dead,  
 And sent him charr'd and blasted to  
 the deathless fire of hell.

## XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-  
 pent and repent,  
 And trust myself forgiven by the  
 God to whom I kneel.  
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be  
 content  
 Till I be leper like yourself, my  
 love, from head to heel.

## XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I,  
 would slight our marriage  
 oath!  
 I held you at that moment even  
 dearer than before;<sup>90</sup>  
 Now God has made you leper in His  
 loving care for both,  
 That we might cling together, never  
 doubt each other more.

## XXIV

The priest, who join'd you to the dead,  
 has join'd our hands of old;  
 If man and wife be but one flesh, let  
 mine be leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if  
 beneath the mould;  
 If you be dead, then I am dead, who  
 only live for you.

## XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
 follow'd by the Moon?  
 The leech forsake the dying bed for  
 terror of his life?  
 The Shadow leave the Substance in  
 the brooding light of noon?  
 Or if I had been the leper would you  
 have left the wife? 100

## XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me off  
 —poor roses—must I go—  
 I have worn them year by year—  
 from the bush we both had  
 set—  
 What? fling them to you?—well—that  
 were hardly gracious. No!  
 Your plague but passes by the  
 touch. A little nearer yet!

## XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the  
 priest; the priest is not to  
 blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either  
 office true.  
 I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss  
 me. In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live  
 and die with you!

[Dean Milman has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the Crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public wel-

fare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me, Domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's 'Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography' will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, Saint Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. —BOURCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES <sup>1</sup>

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
 Whose eyes have known this globe  
 of ours,  
 Her tribes of men, and trees, and  
 flowers,  
 From Corrientes to Japan,

## II

To you that bask below the Line,  
 I soaking here in winter wet—  
 The century's three strong eights  
 have met  
 To drag me down to seventy-nine

## III

In summer if I reach my day—  
 To you, yet young, who breathe the  
 balm  
 Of summer-winters by the palm  
 And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV

I, tolerant of the colder time,  
 Who love the winter woods, to trace  
 On paler heavens the branching  
 grace  
 Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

And see my cedar green, and there  
 My giant ilex keeping leaf  
 When frost is keen and days are  
 brief—  
 Or marvel how in English air

## VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
 Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
 Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
 A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

<sup>1</sup> 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Montevideo before seeing my poem.

## VII

Or watch the waving pine which here  
 The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>1</sup>  
 A name that earth will not forget  
 Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

## VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
 On broader zones beyond the foam,  
 But chaining fancy now at home  
 Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX

Not less would yield full thanks to  
 you  
 For your rich gift, your tale of  
 lands  
 I know not,<sup>2</sup> your Arabian sands;  
 Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-  
 boo,

The wealth of tropic bower and  
 brake;  
 Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>3</sup>  
 Where man, nor only Nature  
 smiles;  
 Your wonder of the boiling lake;<sup>4</sup>

## XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>5</sup>  
 Phra-bat<sup>6</sup> the step; your Pontic  
 coast;  
 Crag-cloister;<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Ghost;<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

<sup>2</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>3</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>5</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>6</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>7</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>8</sup> Anatolian spectre stories.



Hong-Kong,<sup>1</sup> Karnac,<sup>2</sup> and all the  
rest;

## XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my  
friend,  
To prize your various book, and  
send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

## TO MARY BOYLE

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

## I

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still de-  
lay to take  
Your leave of town,  
Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blos-  
som-flake  
Is fluttering down.

Be truer to your promise. There! I  
heard  
Our cuckoo call.  
Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
Nor wait, till all

## III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
plain  
And garden pass,  
And all the gold from each laburnum  
chain  
Drop to the grass.

## IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to  
rest,  
Dead with the dead?  
For ere she left us, when we met, you  
prest  
My hand, and said

<sup>1</sup> The three cities.

<sup>2</sup> Travels in Egypt.

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You  
came not, friend;  
My birds would sing,  
You heard not. Take then this spring-  
flower I send,  
This song of spring,

## VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine  
own rhyme  
By mine old self,  
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
Laid on the shelf—

## VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the  
whitening sloe  
And kingcup blaze,  
And more than half a hundred years  
ago,  
In rick-fire days,

## VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and  
paced his land  
In fear of worse,  
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant  
hand  
Fill with *his* purse.

## IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to  
the height  
By tonguester tricks,  
And once—I well remember that red  
night  
When thirty ricks,

## X

All flaming, made an English home-  
stead hell—  
These hands of mine  
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the  
well  
Along the line,

## XI

When this bare dome had not begun  
to gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy  
dream,  
His girl of girls;

## XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with  
Grief  
Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of re-  
lief  
In change of place.

## XIII

What use to brood? This life of min-  
gled pains  
And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed,  
remains  
The Mystery.

## XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend,  
the wife,  
For ever gone.  
He dreams of that long walk thro'  
desert life  
Without the one

## XV

The silver year should cease to mourn  
and sigh—  
Not long to wait—  
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I  
To that dim gate.

## XVI

Take, read! and be the faults your  
Poet makes  
Or many or few,  
He rests content, if his young music  
wakes  
A wish in you

## XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all  
her realm  
Of sound and smoke,  
For his clear heaven, and these few  
lanes of elm  
And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

## I

THE ground-flame of the crocus  
breaks the mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snow-  
drop cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the  
bee.  
Come, Spring, for now from all the  
dripping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself  
away,  
And hour by hour unfolding wood-  
bine leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops  
the day.  
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;  
The frost-bead melts upon her  
golden hair;  
Her mantel, slowly greening in the  
Sun,  
Now wraps her close, now arching  
leaves her bare  
To breaths of balmier air;  
  
Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-  
come her,  
About her dance the tits, and shriek  
the jays,  
Before her skims the jubilant wood-  
pecker,  
The linnet's bosom blushes at her  
gaze,  
While round her brows a woodland  
culver flits,

Watching her large light eyes and  
gracious looks,  
And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
Patient—the secret splendor of the  
brooks.  
Come, Spring! She comes on waste  
and wood,  
On farm and field; but enter also  
here,  
Diffuse thyself at will thro’ all my  
blood,  
And, tho’ thy violet sicken into sere,  
Lodge with me all the year!

## III

Once more a downy drift against the  
brakes,  
Self-darken’d in the sky, descending  
slow!  
But gladly see I thro’ the wavering  
flakes  
Yon blanching apricot like snow in  
snow.  
These will thine eyes not brook in  
forest-paths,  
On their perpetual pine, nor round  
the beech;  
They fuse themselves to little spicy  
baths,  
Solved in the tender blushes of the  
peach;  
They lose themselves and die  
On that new life that gems the haw-  
thorn line;  
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them  
by,  
And out once more in varnish’d  
glory shine  
Thy stars of celandine.

## IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
lours,  
But in the tearful splendor of her  
smiles  
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
towers  
Fill out the spaces by the barren  
tiles.  
Now past her feet the swallow circling  
flies,

A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
her hand;  
Her light makes rainbows in my clos-  
ing eyes,  
I hear a charm of song thro’ all the  
land.  
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth  
is glad  
To roll her North below thy deep-  
ening dome,  
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly  
clad,  
And these low bushes dip their  
twigs in foam,  
Make all true hearths thy home.

Across my garden! and the thicket  
stirs,  
The fountain pulses high in sunnier  
jets,  
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
purrs,  
The starling claps his tiny castanets.  
Still round her forehead wheels the  
woodland dove,  
And scatters on her throat the  
sparks of dew,  
The kingcup fills her footprint, and  
above  
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal  
blue.  
Hail, ample presence of a Queen,  
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell’d gay,  
Whose mantle, every shade of glanc-  
ing green,  
Flies back in fragrant breezes to  
display  
A tunic white as May!

## VI

She whispers, ‘From the South I bring  
you balm,  
For on a tropic mountain was I  
born,  
While some dark dweller by the coco-  
palm  
Watch’d my far meadow zoned with  
airy morn;  
From under rose a muffled moan of  
floods;

I sat beneath a solitude of snow;  
 There no one came, the turf was fresh,  
     the woods  
 Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
     vales below.  
 I saw beyond their silent tops  
     The streaming marshes of the scar-  
     let cranes,  
 The slant seas leaning on the man-  
     grove copse,  
 And summer basking in the sultry  
     plains  
 About a land of cranes.

## VII

'Then from my vapor-girdle soaring  
     forth  
 I scaled the buoyant highway of the  
     birds,  
 And drank the dew and drizzle of the  
     North,  
 That I might mix with men, and  
     hear their words  
 On pathway'd plains; for—while my  
     hand exults  
 Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
     flowers  
 To work old laws of Love to fresh re-  
     sults,  
 Thro' manifold effect of simple  
     powers—  
 I too would teach the man  
     Beyond the darker hour to see the  
     bright,  
 That his fresh life may close as it be-  
     gan,  
 The still-fulfilling promise of a  
     light  
 Narrowing the bounds of night.'

## VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
     mark  
 The coming year's great good and  
     varied ills,  
 And new developments, whatever  
     spark  
 Be struck from out the clash of  
     warring wills;  
 Or whether, since our nature cannot  
     rest,

The smoke of war's volcano burst  
     again  
 From hoary depths that belt the  
     changeable West,  
 Old Empires, dwellings of the kings  
     of men;  
 Or should those fail that hold the  
     helm,  
 While the long day of knowledge  
     grows and warms,  
 And in the heart of this most ancient  
     realm  
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and  
     alarms  
 Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

## IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
     Who reads thy gradual process,  
     Holy Spring.  
 Thy leaves possess the season in their  
     turn,  
 And in their time thy warblers rise  
     on wing.  
 How surely glidest thou from March  
     to May,  
 And changest, breathing it, the sul-  
     len wind,  
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
     Larger and fuller, like the human  
     mind!  
 Thy warmth from bud to bud  
     Accomplish that blind model in the  
     seed,  
 And men have hopes, which race the  
     restless blood,  
 That after many changes may suc-  
     ceed  
 Life which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

## I

O YOUNG Mariner,  
 You from the haven  
 Under the sea-cliff,  
 You that are watching  
 The gray Magician  
 With eyes of wonder,  
 I am Merlin,

And I am dying,  
 I am Merlin  
 Who follow the Gleam.

Mighty the Wizard  
 Who found me at sunrise  
 Sleeping, and woke me  
 And learn'd me Magic!  
 Great the Master,  
 And sweet the Magic,  
 When over the valley,  
 In early summers,  
 Over the mountain,  
 On human faces,  
 And all around me,  
 Moving to melody,  
 Floated the Gleam.

## III

Once at the croak of a Raven who  
 crost it  
 A barbarous people,  
 Blind to the magic  
 And deaf to the melody,  
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
 A demon vext me,  
 The light retreated,  
 The landskip darken'd,  
 The melody deaden'd,  
 The Master whisper'd,  
 'Follow the Gleam.'

## IV

Then to the melody,  
 Over a wilderness  
 Gliding, and glancing at  
 Elf of the woodland,  
 Gnome of the cavern,  
 Griffin and Giant,  
 And dancing of Fairies  
 In desolate hollows,  
 And wraiths of the mountain,  
 And rolling of dragons  
 By warble of water,  
 Or cataract music  
 Of falling torrents,  
 Flitted the Gleam.

Down from the mountain  
 And over the level,  
 And streaming and shining on  
 Silent river,  
 Silvery willow,  
 Pasture and plowland,  
 Innocent maidens,  
 Garrulous children,  
 Homestead and harvest,  
 Reaper and gleaner,  
 And rough-ruddy faces  
 Of lowly labor,  
 Slided the Gleam—

## VI

Then, with a melody  
 Stronger and statelier,  
 Led me at length  
 To the city and palace  
 Of Arthur the King;  
 Touch'd at the golden  
 Cross of the churches,  
 Flash'd on the tournament,  
 Flicker'd and bicker'd  
 From helmet to helmet,  
 And last on the forehead  
 Of Arthur the blameless  
 Rested the Gleam.

## VII

Clouds and darkness  
 Closed upon Camelot;  
 Arthur had vanish'd  
 I knew not whither,  
 The king who loved me,  
 And cannot die;  
 Far out of the darkness  
 Silent and slowly  
 The Gleam, that had waned to a win-  
 try glimmer  
 On icy fallow  
 And faded forest,  
 Drew to the valley  
 Named of the shadow,  
 And slowly brightening  
 Out of the glimmer,  
 And slowly moving again to a melody  
 Yearningly tender,

Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with the Gleam.

## VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom;  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came—  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers the Gleam.

## IX

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow the Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

[I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter: but his ideal was not high nor

fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist' almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad, and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.—EDWARD FITZGERALD, 'Letters and Literary Remains,' vol. i.]

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this.'

Who are you? What! the Lady Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you. To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—

Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail

To conjure and concentrate into form And color all you are, the fault is less In me than Art. What artist ever yet Could make pure light live on the canvas? Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills! so hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more delight

To roll himself in meadow grass than I

To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn? Have I not met you somewhere long ago?

I am all but sure I have—in Kendal church—

O, yes! I hired you for a season there, And then we parted; but you look so kind

That you will not deny my sultry throat

One draught of icy water. There—you spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
 Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are  
     they tears?

For me—they do me too much grace  
     —for me?

O Mary, Mary!

    Vexing you with words!  
 Words only, born of fever, or the  
     fumes

Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,  
     —words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back  
     again

Into the common day, the sounder  
     self.

God stay me there, if only for your  
     sake,

The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted  
     wife

That ever wore a Christian marriage-  
     ring.

My curse upon the Master's apoth-  
     egm,

That wife and children drag an artist  
     down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the heaven  
     of Art,

And lured me from the household fire  
     on earth.

To you my days have been a lifelong  
     lie,

Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you  
     say,

'Take comfort you have won the  
     painter's fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in  
     me,

And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
     there.

What fame? I am not Raphael,  
     Titian,—no,

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
 Wrong there! The painter's fame?

    but mine, that grew  
 Blown into glittering by the popular

breath,  
 May float awhile beneath the sun,  
     may roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about  
     it—

    There!  
 The color'd bubble bursts above the  
     abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

    Is it so?  
 Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
     with me

To make it dearer.

    Look, the sun has risen  
 To flame along another dreary day.

Your hand. How bright you keep your  
     marriage-ring!

Raise me. I thank you.

    Has your opiate then  
 Bred this black mood? or am I con-  
     scious more

Than other Masters, of the chasm be-  
     tween

Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom  
     of age

And suffering cloud the height I stand  
     upon

Even from myself? stand? stood—no  
     more.

    And yet  
 The world would lose, if such a wife as  
     you

Should vanish unrecorded. Might I  
     crave

One favor? I am bankrupt of all  
     claim

On your obedience, and my strongest  
     wish

Falls flat before your least unwilling-  
     ness.

Still, would you—if it please you—sit  
     to me?

    I dream'd last night of that clear  
     summer noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to  
     foot

With your own shadow in the placid  
     lake,

You clapt our infant daughter, heart  
     to heart.

I had been among the hills, and  
     brought you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this  
     you twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,  
 Mother and child. A sound from far

    away,  
 No louder than a bee among the  
     flowers.

A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.  
 You still'd it for the moment with a  
     song  
 Which often echo'd in me, while I  
     stood  
 Before the great Madonna-master-  
     pieces  
 Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.  
 You should have been—I might have  
     made you once,  
 Had I but known you as I know you  
     now—  
 The true Alcestis of the time. Your  
     song—  
 Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
 That I—even I—at times remember'd  
     you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!  
 Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
     sweet!  
 All mine from your pretty blue eyes to  
     your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me—three-quar-  
     ter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my  
     bliss!  
 For I give you this, and I give you this!  
 And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a  
     kiss!

Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of  
     death—

'Father and Mother will watch you  
     grow'—

You watch'd, not I; she did not grow,  
     she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you  
     grow,  
 And gather the roses whenever they  
     blow,  
 And find the white heather wherever  
     you go,

My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
     heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There, there,  
     there! a child  
 Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle  
     tools,  
 Stamp'd into dust—tremulous, all  
     awry,  
 Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled  
     pool,—  
 Not one stroke firm. This Art, that  
     harlot-like  
 Seduced me from you, leaves me har-  
     lot-like,  
 Who love her still, and whimper, im-  
     potent  
 To win her back before I die—and  
     then—  
 Then, in the loud world's bastard  
     judgment-day,  
 One truth will damn me with the  
     mindless mob,  
 Who feel no touch of my temptation,  
     more  
 Than all the myriad lies that blacken  
     round  
 The corpse of every man that gains a  
     name;  
 'This model husband, this fine artist!'  
     Fool,  
 What matters? Six foot deep of burial  
     mould  
 Will dull their comments! Ay, but  
     when the shout  
 Of His descending peals from heaven,  
     and throbs  
 Thro' earth and all her graves, if *He*  
     should ask,  
 'Why left you wife and children? for  
     my sake,  
 According to my word?' and I replied,  
 'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would  
     sound so mean  
 That all the dead, who wait the doom  
     of hell  
 For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
 Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless  
     Mussul-man  
 Who flings his bowstrung harem in  
     the sea,  
 Would turn, and glare at me, and  
     point and jeer,  
 And gibber at the worm who, living,  
     made



The wife of wives a widow-bride, and  
lost  
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!  
The coals of fire you heap upon my  
head  
Have crazed me. Some one knocking  
there without?  
No! Will my Indian brother come?  
to find  
Me or my coffin? Should I know the  
man?  
This worn-out Reason dying in her  
house  
May leave the windows blinded, and  
if so,  
Bid him farewell for me, and tell  
him—Hope!  
I hear a death-bed angel whisper,  
'Hope.'  
'The miserable have no medicine—  
But only hope!' He said it—in the  
play.

His crime was of the senses; of the  
mind  
Mine—worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—  
O, let me lean my head upon your  
breast.  
'Beat, little heart' on this fool brain of  
mine.  
I once had friends—and many—none  
like you.  
I love you more than when we mar-  
ried. Hope!  
O, yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven,  
and thence—  
For you forgive me, you are sure of  
that—  
Reflected, sends a light on the for-  
given.

### PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.

HORACE.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high  
over the sacred fountain?  
Bards, that the mighty Muses have  
raised to the heights of the  
mountain,  
And over the flight of the Ages! O  
Goddesses, help me up thither!  
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of  
Cæsar, but mine would not  
wither.  
Steep is the mountain, but you, you  
will help me to overcome it,  
And stand with my head in the zenith,  
and roll my voice from the  
summit,  
Sounding for ever and ever thro'  
Earth and her listening na-  
tions,  
And mixt with the great sphere-music  
of stars and of constellations.

### II

What be those two shapes high over  
the sacred fountain,  
Taller than all the Muses, and huger  
than all the mountain?  
On those two known peaks they stand  
ever spreading and heighten-  
ing;  
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted  
by more than lightning!  
Look, in their deep double shadow the  
crown'd ones all disappearing!  
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor  
hope for a deathless hearing!  
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass on!  
the sight confuses—  
These are Astronomy and Geology,  
terrible Muses!

### III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from  
off a pure Pierian altar,  
Tho' their music here be mortal need  
the singer greatly care?  
Other songs for other worlds! the fire  
within him would not falter;  
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer  
here is Homer there.

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to  
 the soul of a man,  
 And the man said, 'Am I your  
 debtor?'  
 And the Lord—'Not yet; but make it  
 as clean as you can,  
 And then I will let you a better.'

If my body come from brutes, my  
 soul uncertain or a fable,  
 Why not bask amid the senses while  
 the sun of morning shines,  
 I, the finer brute rejoicing in my  
 bounds, and in my stable,  
 Youth and health, and birth and  
 wealth, and choice of women  
 and of wines?

## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
 Age, save breaking my bones  
 on the rack?  
 Would I had past in the morning  
 that looks so bright from afar!

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast  
 that was linkt with thee eighty  
 years back.  
 Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
 heaven that hangs on a star.

If my body come from brutes, tho'  
 somewhat finer than their own,  
 I am heir, and this my kingdom.  
 Shall the royal voice be mute?  
 No, but if the rebel subject seek to  
 drag me from the throne,  
 Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and  
 rule thy province of the brute.

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age,  
 and I gaze at a field in the  
 Past,

Where I sank with the body at  
 times in the sloughs of a low  
 desire,  
 But I hear no yelp of the beast, and  
 the Man is quiet at last,  
 As he stands on the heights of his  
 life with a glimpse of a height  
 that is higher.

## FAR—FAR—AWAY

## (FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the  
 fields he knew  
 As where earth's green stole into heav-  
 en's own hue,  
 Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native  
 dells?  
 The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening  
 bells  
 Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic  
 pain or joy,  
 Thro' those three words would haunt  
 him when a boy,  
 Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
 breath  
 From some fair dawn beyond the  
 doors of death  
 Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates  
 of birth,  
 The faint horizons, all the bounds of  
 earth,  
 Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no  
 words could give?  
 O dying words, can Music make you  
 live  
 Far—far—away?

## THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

### POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always  
    move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your  
    craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain;  
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry  
    'Slow,'  
But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
Down hill 'Too-quick' the chain.

### BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city the centre and crater  
of European confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek for  
the rights of an equal human-  
ity  
How often your Re-volution has  
proven but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides  
of a civic insanity!

### THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in your  
    May,  
Two words, 'My Rose,' set all your  
    face aglow,  
And now that I am white and you  
    are gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,  
Blooms in the past, but close to me  
    to-day,  
As this red rose, which on our terrace  
    here  
Glow in the blue of fifty miles  
    away.

### THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so  
    gloom'd with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting  
    scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright  
may show  
In some fifth act what this wild  
Drama means.

### ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are in-  
complete,  
I prize that soul where man and  
woman meet,  
Which types all Nature's male and  
female plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not  
woman-man.

### TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and  
thence maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears  
be vain!  
At times the small black fly upon the  
pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant  
plain.

### THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes,  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes,  
February fair-maid!

## THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.  
 I know it, I know it, I know it.

Light again, leaf again, life again, love again!  
 Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.

Last year you sang it as gladly.

'New, new, new, new!' Is it then so new

That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young again,'

Never a prophet so crazy!

And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,

See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy year!'

O warble unhidden, unbidden!

Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,

And all the winters are hidden.

## THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,  
 Young and old,  
 Like yon oak

Bright in spring,  
 Living gold;

Summer-rich  
 Then; and then  
 Autumn-changed,  
 Soberer-hued  
 Gold again.

All his leaves  
 Fallen at length,  
 Look, he stands,  
 Trunk and bough,  
 Naked strength.

## IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I shall  
 not find,

Whose Faith and Work were bells  
 of full accord,

My friend, the most unworldly of  
 mankind,

Most generous of all Ultramon-  
 tanes, Ward,

How subtle at tierce and quart of  
 mind with mind,

How loyal in the following of thy  
 Lord!

# QUEEN MARY

## A DRAMA

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA

THE COUNT DE FERIA

PETER MARTYR.

FATHER COLE.

FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT

ANTHONY KNYVETI

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES

ALICE

MAID OF HONOR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

JOAN

TIB

} *two Country Wives.*

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament,  
two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards,  
Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, etc.

# QUEEN MARY

## ACT I

SCENE I—ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED

CROWD. MARSHALMEN.

*Marshalman.* Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, say'st thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary!

*First Citizen.* That 's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

*Second Citizen.* It means a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* Nay, it means true-born.

*First Citizen.* Why, did n't the Parliament make her a bastard?

*Second Citizen.* No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

*Third Citizen.* That was after, man; that was after.

*First Citizen.* Then which is the bastard?

*Second Citizen.* Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

*Third Citizen.* Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christ-mases.

*Old Nokes (dreamily).* Who 's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

*Third Citizen.* No, old Nokes.

*Old Nokes.* It 's Harry!

*Third Citizen.* It 's Queen Mary.

*Old Nokes.* The blessed Mary 's a-passing! [*Falls on his knees.*]

*Nokes.* Let father alone, my masters! he 's past your questioning.

*Third Citizen.* Answer thou for him, then! thou 'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

*Nokes.* Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon, i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

*Nokes.* I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

*Marshalman.* What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I 'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the rood I will.

*First Citizen.* He swears by the rood. Whew!

*Second Citizen.* Hark! the drum-pets.

[*The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.*]

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland! [*Exeunt.*]

*Manent* TWO GENTLEMEN.

*First Gentleman.* By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

*Second Gentleman.* She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

*First Gentleman.* I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

*Second Gentleman.* Ay, that was in her hour of joy. There will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again; this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

*First Gentleman.* And, furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and, furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

*Second Gentleman.* Well, sir, I look for happy times.

*First Gentleman.* There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

*Second Gentleman.* I suppose you touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the devil. I trust it is but a rumor.

*First Gentleman.* She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and

the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

*Second Gentleman.* Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

*First Gentleman.* Ay, but he's too old.

*Second Gentleman.* And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

*First Gentleman.* Oh, the Pope could dispense with his cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all. Will you not follow the procession?

*Second Gentleman.* No; I have seen enough for this day.

*First Gentleman.* Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

## A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE

*Cranmer.* To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our bishops from their sees

Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow,

Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the deans

Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—

Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;

So they report. I shall be left alone.

No; Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, will not fly.

*Enter* PETER MARTYR.

*Peter Martyr.* Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name stands first of those who sign'd the letter patent That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

*Cranmer.* Stand first it may, but it was written last.

Those that are now her privy council sign'd

Before me; nay, the judges had pronounced

That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.

Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes

Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,

Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,

Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield

His Church of England to the Papal wolf

And Mary; then I could no more—I sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency, She cannot pass her traitor council by,

To make me headless.

*Peter Martyr.* That might be forgiven.

I tell you, fly, my lord. You do not own

The bodily presence in the Eucharist, Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice: Your creed will be your death.

*Cranmer.* Step after step, Thro' many voices crying right and left,

Have I climb'd back into the primal church,

And stand within the porch, and Christ with me.

My flight were such a scandal to the faith,

The downfall of so many simple souls, I dare not leave my post.

*Peter Martyr.* But you divorced Queen Catharine and her father; hence, her hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

*Cranmer.* I cannot help it. The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.'—'T is written,

'They shall be childless.' True, Mary was born,

But France would not accept her for a bride

As being born from incest; and this wrought

Upon the King; and child by child, you know,

Were momentary sparkles, out as quick

Almost as kindled; and he brought his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous. But wherefore am I trenching on the time

That should already have seen your steps a mile

From me and Lambeth? God be with you! Go.

*Peter Martyr.* Ah, but how fierce a letter you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury To please the Queen!

*Cranmer.* It was a wheedling monk Set up the mass.

*Peter Martyr.* I know it, my good lord.

But you so bubbled over with hot terms

Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist, She never will forgive you. Fly, my lord, fly!

*Cranmer.* I wrote it, and God grant me power to burn!

*Peter Martyr.* They have given me a safe conduct; for all that

I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,

Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.

*Cranmer.* Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.

[Exit Peter Martyr.]

*Enter* OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers



Are here in force to take you to the  
Tower,

*Cranmer.* Ay, gentle friend, admit  
them. I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III

#### ST. PAUL'S CROSS

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit. A crowd.* MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY. *The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man ROGER in front of the stage.* *Hubbub.*

*Noailles.* Hast thou let fall those  
papers in the palace?

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* 'There will be no peace  
for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* And the other, 'Long live  
Elizabeth the Queen!'

*Roger.* Ay, sir; she needs must  
tread upon them.

*Noailles.* Well.

These beastly swine make such a  
grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is  
saying.

*Roger.* Quiet a moment, my mas-  
ters; hear what the shaveling has to  
say for himself.

*Crowd.* Hush—hear!

*Bourne.* —and so this unhappy  
land, long divided in itself, and sever'd  
from the faith, will return into  
the one true fold, seeing that our gra-  
cious Virgin Queen hath—

*Crowd.* No pope! no pope!

*Roger (to those about him, mim-  
icking Bourne).*—hath sent for the  
holy legate of the holy father the  
Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that  
holy absolution which—

*First Citizen.* Old Bourne to the  
life!

*Second Citizen.* Holy absolution!  
holy Inquisition!

*Third Citizen.* Down with the Pa-  
pist! [*Hubbub.*]

*Bourne.* —and now that your good  
bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long  
under bonds for the faith— [*Hubbub.*]

*Noailles.* Friend Roger, steal thou  
in among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout 'Elizabeth.'  
Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as mid-  
winter,

Begin with him.

*Roger (goes).* By the mass, old  
friend, we'll have no pope here while  
the Lady Elizabeth lives.

*Gospeller.* Art thou of the true  
faith, fellow, that swearest by the  
mass?

*Roger.* Ay, that am I, new con-  
verted, but the old leaven sticks to  
my tongue yet.

*First Citizen.* He says right; by the  
mass, we'll have no mass here.

*Voices of the Crowd.* Peace! hear  
him; let his own words damn the Pa-  
pist. From thine own mouth I judge  
thee—tear him down!

*Bourne.* —and since our gracious  
Queen, let me call her our second  
Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify  
the true temple—

*First Citizen.* Virgin Mary! we'll  
have no virgins here—we'll have the  
Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is  
hurled and sticks in the pulpit.  
The mob throng to the pulpit  
stairs.*]

*Marchioness of Exeter.* Son Cour-  
tenay, wilt thou see the holy  
father

Murdered before thy face? up, son,  
and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not  
come to harm.

*Courtenay (in the pulpit).* Shame,  
shame, my masters! are you  
English-born,

And set yourselves by hundreds  
against one?

*Crowd.* A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants  
crosses at the back of the  
stage.*]

*Noailles.* These birds of passage  
come before their time.

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

*Roger.* My masters, yonder 's fatter game for you  
Than this old gaping gurgyle; look you there—

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

*Noailles* (to *Roger*). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head—

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon,  
Arise against her and dethrone the Queen—

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion any way—

That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon;  
A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

*Courtenay.* My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong,

For I am mighty popular with them,  
*Noailles.*

*Noailles.* You look'd a king.

*Courtenay.* Why not? I am king's blood.

*Noailles.* And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

*Courtenay.* Ah!

*Noailles.* But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?

*Courtenay.* 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

*Noailles.* You 've but a dull life in this maiden court,

I fear, my lord?

*Courtenay.* A life of nods and yawns.

*Noailles.* So you would honor my poor house to-night,

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more—we play.

*Courtenay.* At what?

*Noailles.* The game of chess.

*Courtenay.* The game of chess!  
I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

*Noailles.* Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,  
And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers

That go between us.

*Courtenay.* Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a-playing.

*Noailles.* Nay; not so long I trust.  
That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

*Courtenay.* The King is skilful at it?

*Noailles.* Very, my Lord.

*Courtenay.* And the stakes high?

*Noailles.* But not beyond your means.

*Courtenay.* Well, I 'm the first of players. I shall win.

*Noailles.* With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the King's moves,

I think you may.

*Courtenay.* When do you meet?

*Noailles.* To-night.

*Courtenay* (aside). I will be there; the fellow 's at his tricks—

Deep—I shall fathom him. (Aloud.)  
Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

*Noailles.* Good-day, my Lord.  
Strange game of chess! a king

That with her own pawns plays against a queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a king.

Ay; but this fine blue-blooded *Courtenay* seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a knight,  
 That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,  
 Skips every way, from levity or from fear.  
 Well, we shall use him somehow, so that Gardiner  
 And Simon Renard spy not out our game  
 Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that any one  
 Suspected thee to be my man?  
*Roger.* Not one, sir.  
*Noailles.* No! the disguise was perfect. Let 's away. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY.

*Courtenay.* So yet am I,  
 Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,  
 A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip.  
 Pah!  
 The Queen is ill advised. Shall I turn traitor?  
 They 've almost talked me into it; yet the word  
 Affrights me somewhat; to be such a one  
 As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in it.  
 Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your age  
 And by your looks you are not worth the having,  
 Yet by your crown you are.  
 [*Seeing Elizabeth.*  
 The Princess there?  
 If I tried her, and la—she 's amorous.  
 Have we not heard of her in Edward's time,  
 Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord Admiral?  
 I do believe she 'd yield. I should be still

A party in the State; and then, who knows—

*Elizabeth.* What are you musing on, my Lord of Devon?

*Courtenay.* Has not the Queen—

*Elizabeth.* Done what, Sir?

*Courtenay.* —made you follow The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Lennox?—you, The heir presumptive.

*Elizabeth.* Why do you ask? you know it.

*Courtenay.* You needs must bear it hardly.

*Elizabeth.* No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

*Courtenay.* Well, I was musing upon that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours; we should be friends.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, the hatred of another to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

*Courtenay.* Might it not Be the rough preface of some closer bond?

*Elizabeth.* My lord, you late were loosed from out the Tower, Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis, You spent your life; that broken, out you flutter

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now would settle

Upon this flower, now that. But all things here

At court are known; you have solicited

The Queen, and been rejected.

*Courtenay.* Flower, she! Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever tried.

*Elizabeth.* Are you the bee to try me? why, but now

I called you butterfly.

*Courtenay.* You did me wrong, I love not to be called a butterfly.

Why do you call me butterfly?

*Elizabeth.* Why do you go so gay then?

*Courtenay.* Velvet and gold.

This dress was made me as the Earl of Devon

To take my seat in; looks it not right royal?

*Elizabeth.* So royal that the Queen forbade you wearing it.

*Courtenay.* I wear it then to spite her.

*Elizabeth.* My lord, my lord; I see you in the Tower again. Her Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince—prelates kneel to you.—

*Courtenay.* I am the noblest blood in Europe, Madam, A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

*Elizabeth.* She hears you make your boast that after all She means to wed you. Folly, my good lord.

*Courtenay.* How folly? a great party in the state Wills me to wed her.

*Elizabeth.* Failing her, my lord, Doth not as great a party in the State Will you to wed me?

*Courtenay.* Even so, fair lady.

*Elizabeth.* You know to flatter ladies.

*Courtenay.* Nay, I meant True matters of the heart.

*Elizabeth.* My heart, my lord, Is no great party in the State as yet.

*Courtenay.* Great, said you? nay, you shall be great. I love you, Lay my life in your hands. Can you be close?

*Elizabeth.* Can you, my lord?

*Courtenay.* Close as a miser's casket.

Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,

The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,

Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,

Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.

If Mary will not hear us—well—conjecture—

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,

The people there so worship me—your ear;

You shall be Queen.

*Elizabeth.* You speak too low, my lord;

I cannot hear you.

*Courtenay.* I'll repeat it.

*Elizabeth.* No!

Stand further off, or you may lose your head.

*Courtenay.* I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.

*Elizabeth.* Have you, my lord? Best keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except indeed

Among the many. I believe you mine; And so you may continue mine, farewell,

And that at once.

*Enter MARY, behind.*

*Mary.* Whispering—leagued together

To bar me from my Philip.

*Courtenay.* Pray—consider—

*Elizabeth (seeing the Queen).* Well, that 's a noble horse of yours, my lord.

I trust that he will carry you well to-day,

And heal your headache.

*Courtenay.* You are wild; what headache?

Heartache, perchance, not headache.

*Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay).* Are you blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit. Exit Mary.*]

*Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.*

*Howard.* Was that my lord of Devon? do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.

He hath fallen out of favor with the Queen.

She fears the lords may side with you  
and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he  
dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather  
come

To woo you, niece, he is dangerous  
everyway.

*Elizabeth.* Not very dangerous that  
way, my good uncle.

*Howard.* But your own state is full  
of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers,  
Look to you as the one to crown their  
ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray  
you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any  
such,

Speak not thereof—no, not to your  
best friend,

Lest you should be confounded with  
it. Still—

Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says,  
You know your Latin—quiet as a dead  
body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling  
you?

*Elizabeth.* Whether he told me any-  
thing or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious  
uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

*Howard.* You do right well.

I do not care to know; but this I  
charge you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord  
Chancellor—

I count it as a kind of virtue in him,  
He hath not many—as a mastiff dog  
May love a puppy cur for no more  
reason

Than that the twain have been tied up  
together,

Thus Gardiner—for the two were fel-  
low-prisoners

So many years in yon accursed  
Tower—

Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look  
to it, niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner ques-  
tions him;

All oozes out; yet him—because they  
know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantag-  
enet—

Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too—the  
people

Claim as their natural leader—ay,  
some say

That you shall marry him, make him  
king belike.

*Elizabeth.* Do they say so, good  
uncle?

*Howard.* Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with  
me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

*Elizabeth.* No, good uncle.

*Enter GARDINER.*

*Gardiner.* The Queen would see  
your Grace upon the moment.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord bishop?

*Gardiner.* I think she means to  
counsel your withdrawing

To Ashridge, or some other country  
house.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord bishop?

*Gardiner.* I do but bring the mes-  
sage, know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from  
herself.

*Elizabeth.* 'T is mine own wish ful-  
fill'd before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant  
to crave

Permission of her Highness to retire  
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies  
there.

*Gardiner.* Madam, to have the wish  
before the word

Is man's good fairy—and the Queen is  
yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand,  
Whereof 't is like enough she means  
to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

*Elizabeth.* My lord,

I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

*Gardiner.* I doubt it not, madam,  
most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*

*Howard.* See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord  
of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I my-  
self

Believe it will be better for your wel-  
fare.

Your time will come.

*Elizabeth.* I think my time will  
come.

Uncle,

I am of sovereign nature, that I know,  
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt  
within me

Stirrings of some great doom when  
God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—  
his big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he rubs,  
His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd  
eyes

Half fright me.

*Howard.* You've a bold heart; keep  
it so.

He cannot touch you save that you  
turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you—you are  
one

Who love that men should smile upon  
you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason—some  
of them.

*Elizabeth.* I spy the rock beneath  
the smiling sea.

But if this Philip, the proud Catholic  
prince,

And this bald priest, and she that hates  
me, seek

In that lone house to practise on my  
life,

By poison, fire, shot, stab—

*Howard.* They will not, niece.

Mine is the fleet and all the power at  
sea—

Or will be in a moment. If they dared  
To harm you, I would blow this Philip  
and all

Your trouble to the dog-star and the  
devil.

*Elizabeth.* To the Pleiads, uncle;  
they have lost a sister.

*Howard.* But why say that? what  
have you done to lose her?

Come, come, I will go with you to the  
Queen. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V

A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY with PHILIP'S miniature. ALICE.

*Mary (kissing the miniature).* Most  
goodly, kinglike, and an em-  
peror's son,—

A king to be,—is he not noble, girl?

*Alice.* Goodly enough, your Grace,  
and yet, methinks,

I have seen goodlier.

*Mary.* Ay, some waxen doll

Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;  
All red and white, the fashion of our  
land.

But my good mother came—God rest  
her soul!—

Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,  
And in my likings.

*Alice.* By your Grace's leave,  
Your royal mother came of Spain, but  
took

To the English red and white. Your  
royal father—

For so they say—was all pure lily and  
rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

*Mary.* O just God!

Sweet mother, you had time and cause  
enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.

Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced,  
forlorn!

And then the King—that traitor past  
forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him,  
married

The mother of Elizabeth—a heretic  
Even as *she* is; but God hath sent me  
here

To take such order with all heretics  
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'  
My father and my brother had not  
lived.

What wast thou saying of this Lady  
Jane,

Now in the Tower?

*Alice.* Why madam, she was passing  
Some chapel down in Essex, and with  
her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady  
Anne

Bow'd to the pyx; but Lady Jane  
stood up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.  
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady  
Anne,

To him within there who made heaven  
and earth?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your  
Grace

What Lady Jane replied.

*Mary.* But I will have it.

*Alice.* She said—pray pardon me,  
and pity her—  
She hath hearken'd evil counsel—ah!  
she said

The baker made him.

*Mary.* Monstrous! blasphemous!  
She ought to burn. Hence, thou

[*Exit Alice.*

No—being traitor  
Her head will fall. Shall it? she is but  
a child.

We do not kill the child for doing that  
His father whipt him into doing—a  
head

So full of grace and beauty! would  
that mine

Were half as gracious! O, my lord to  
be,

My love, for thy sake only!  
I am eleven years older than he is.  
But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,  
But love me only. Then the bastard  
sprout,

My sister, is far fairer than myself.  
Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with my-  
self.

Paget is for him—for to wed with  
Spain

Would treble England—Gardiner is  
against him;

The Council, people, Parliament  
against him;

But I will have him! My hard father  
hated me;

My brother rather hated me than  
loved;

My sister cowers and hates me. Holy  
Virgin,

Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me  
my prayer.

Give me my Philip; and we two will  
lead

The living waters of the Faith again  
Back thro' their widow'd channel here,  
and watch

The parch'd banks rolling incense, as  
of old,

To heaven, and kindled with the palms  
of Christ!

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits, sir?

*Usher.* Madam, the Lord Chan-  
cellor.

*Mary.* Bid him come in.

*Enter GARDINER.*

Good morning, my good lord.

[*Exit Usher.*

*Gardiner.* That every morning of  
your Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's  
prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen  
Gardiner.

*Mary.* Come you to tell me this, my  
lord?

*Gardiner.* And more.

Your people have begun to learn your  
worth.

Your pious wish to pay King Ed-  
ward's debts,

Your lavish household curb'd, and the  
remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the peo-  
ple,

Make all tongues praise and all hearts  
beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved. The  
realm is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide; we might  
withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

*Mary.* Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate of  
France!

I am Queen of England; take mine  
eyes, mine heart,  
But do not lose me Calais.

*Gardiner.* Do not fear it.  
Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is  
loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am  
your friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I  
speak?

*Mary.* I can forespeak your speak-  
ing. Would I marry  
Prince Philip, if all England hate him?  
That is

Your question, and I front it with  
another:

Is it England, or a party? Now, your  
answer.

*Gardiner.* My answer is, I wear be-  
neath my dress

A shirt of mail; my house hath been  
assaulted,

And when I walk abroad the populace,  
With fingers pointed like so many  
daggers,

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and  
Philip;

And when I sleep a hundred men-at-  
arms

Guard my poor dreams for England.  
Men would murder me,

Because they think me favorer of this  
marriage.

*Mary.* And that were hard upon  
you, my Lord Chancellor.

*Gardiner.* But our young Earl of  
Devon—

*Mary.* Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed  
him at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and—the  
fool—

He wrecks his health and wealth on  
courtesans,

And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

*Gardiner.* More like a school-boy  
that hath broken bounds

Sickening himself with sweets.

*Mary.* I will not hear of him.  
Good, then, they will revolt; but I am  
Tudor,

And shall control them.

*Gardiner.* I will help you, madam,  
Even to the utmost. All the church is  
grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-  
pulpited

The shepherd of Saint Peter, raised  
the rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am  
all thanks

To God and to your Grace; yet I  
know well,

Your people, and I go with them so  
far,

Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard  
here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or  
church.

*Mary (showing the picture).* Is this  
the face of one who plays the  
tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and  
gentle?

*Gardiner.* Madam, methinks a cold  
face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of  
Courtenay—

Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his  
life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

*Mary.* What is that you mutter?

*Gardiner.* O, madam, take it  
bluntly; marry Philip,

And be stepmother of a score of sons!  
The prince is known in Spain, in

Flanders, ha!

For Philip—

*Mary.* You offend us; you may  
leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

*Gardiner.* If your Majesty—

*Mary.* I have sworn upon the body  
and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

*Gardiner.* Hath your Grace so  
sworn?

*Mary.* Ay, Simon Renard knows it.

*Gardiner.* News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gar-  
diner,

So you still care to trust him some  
what less



Than Simon Renard, to compose the event

In some such form as least may harm your Grace.

*Mary.* I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

*Gardiner.* All my hope is now It may be found a scandal.

*Mary.* You offend us.

*Gardiner (aside).* These princes are like children, must be physic'd,

The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool. *[Exit.]*

*Enter USHER.*

*Mary.* Who waits?

*Usher.* The ambassador from France, your Grace.

*Mary (sits down).* Bid him come in. Good morning, Sir de Noailles. *[Exit Usher.]*

*Noailles (entering).* A happy morning to your Majesty.

*Mary.* And I should some time have a happy morning; I have had none yet. What says the King your master?

*Noailles.* Madam, my master hears with much alarm

That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain—

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness,

That if this Philip be the titular King Of England, and at war with him, your Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,

Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore, my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,

Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.

*Mary.* Why some fresh treaty? wherefore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain

All former treaties with his Majesty. Our royal word for that! and your good master,

Pray God he do not be the first to break them,

Must be content with that; and so, farewell.

*Noailles (going, returns).* I would your answer had been other, madam,

For I foresee dark days.

*Mary.* And so do I, sir; Your master works against me in the dark.

I do believe he help Northumberland Against me.

*Noailles.* Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should we move against you?

*Mary.* Will you hear why Mary of Scotland,—for I have not own'd

My sister, and I will not,—after me Is heir of England; and my royal father,

To make the crown of Scotland one with ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's bride;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe from Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.

See then:

Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,

Would make our England, France; Mary of England, joining hands with Spain,

Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain and we,

One crown, might rule the world. There lies your fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide and seek.

Show me your faces!

*Noailles.* Madam, I am amazed. French, I must needs wish all good things for France.

That must be pardon'd me; but I protest

Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight

Than mine into the future. We but seek

Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

*Mary.* Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever?

*Noailles.* Only once.

*Mary.* Is this like Philip?

*Noailles.* Ay, but nobler-looking.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of the Emperor?

*Noailles.* No, surely.

*Mary.* I can make allowance for thee,

Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

*Noailles.* Make no allowance for the naked truth.

He is every way a lesser man than Charles;

Stone-hard, ice-cold—no dash of daring in him.

*Mary.* If cold, his life is pure.

*Noailles.* Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

*Mary.* Say'st thou?

*Noailles.* A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).

*Mary.* Your audience is concluded, sir. (*Exit Noailles.*) You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

*Enter USHER.*

Who waits?

*Usher.* The ambassador of Spain, your Grace. [*Exit.*]

*Enter SIMON RENARD.*

*Mary (rising to meet him).* Thou art ever welcome, Simon Renard. Hast thou

Brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised

Long since, a formal offer of the hand Of Philip?

*Renard.* Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me.

I know not wherefore—some mischance of flood,

And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or wave

And wind at their old battle; he must have written.

*Mary.* But Philip never writes me one poor word,

Which in his absence had been all my wealth.

Strange in a wooer!

*Renard.* Yet I know the Prince, So your king-parliament suffer him to land,

Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

*Mary.* God change the pebble which his kingly foot

First presses into some more costly stone

Than ever blinded eye! I'll have one mark it

And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike;

I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond.

Let the great angel of the Church come with him,

Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail!

God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea,

And here at land among the people! O Renard,

I am much beset, I am almost in despair.

Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours;

But for our heretic Parliament—

*Renard.* O madam,

You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles,

Bade you so softly with your heretics here,

Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then

Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides,

When Henry broke the carcase of your church

To pieces, there were many wolves  
among you

Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into  
their den.

The Pope would have you make them  
render these;

So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole  
—ill counsel!

These let them keep at present; stir  
not yet

This matter of the Church lands. At  
his coming

Your star will rise.

*Mary.* My star! a baleful one.  
I see but the black night, and hear the  
wolf.

What star?

*Renard.* Your star will be your  
princely son,  
Heir of this England and the Nether-  
lands!

And if your wolf the while should  
howl for more,  
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish  
gold.

I do believe—I have dusted some al-  
ready—

That, soon or late, your Parliament is  
ours.

*Mary.* Why do they talk so foully  
of your Prince,

*Renard?*

*Renard.* The lot of princes. To sit  
high

Is to be lied about.

*Mary.* They call him cold,  
Haughty, ay worse.

*Renard.* Why, doubtless, Philip  
shows

Some of the bearing of your blue  
blood—still

All within measure—nay, it well be-  
comes him.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of  
his father?

*Renard.* Nay, some believe that he  
will go beyond him.

*Mary.* Is this like him?

*Renard.* Ay, somewhat; but your  
Philip

Is the most princelike prince beneath  
the sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

*Mary.* Of a pure life?

*Renard.* As an angel among angels.

Yea, by Heaven,

The text—Your Highness knows it,  
'Whosoever

Looketh after a woman,' would not  
graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy in  
him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

*Mary.* I am happy in him there.

*Renard.* And would be altogether  
happy, madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to  
closer.

You have sent her from the court, but  
then she goes,

I warrant, not to hear the nightin-  
gales,

But hatch you some new treason in  
the woods.

*Mary.* We have our spies abroad to  
catch her tripping,  
And then, if caught, to the Tower.

*Renard.* The Tower! the block!  
The word has turn'd your Highness  
pale; the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your  
father's time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd  
with the jest

When the head leapt—so common! I  
do think,

To save your crown, that it must  
come to this.

*Mary.* No, *Renard*; it must never  
come to this.

*Renard.* Not yet; but your old trai-  
tors of the Tower—

Why, when you put Northumberland  
to death,

The sentence having passed upon  
them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk,  
Guildford Dudley,

Even that young girl who dared to  
wear your crown?

*Mary.* Dared? nay, not so; the  
child obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it  
on her.

*Renard.* Good madam, when the  
Roman wish'd to reign,  
He slew not him alone who wore the  
purple,  
But his assessor in the throne, per-  
chance  
A child more innocent than Lady  
Jane.

*Mary.* I am English Queen, not  
Roman Emperor.

*Renard.* Yet too much mercy is a  
want of mercy,  
And wastes more life. Stamp out the  
fire, or this  
Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn  
the throne  
Where you should sit with Philip. He  
will not come  
Till she be gone.

*Mary.* Indeed, if that were true—  
For Philip comes, one hand in mine,  
and one  
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the  
Church—  
But no, no, no! Farewell. I am some-  
what faint  
With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am  
not Queen  
Of mine own heart, which every now  
and then  
Beats me half dead. Yet stay, this  
golden chain—  
My father on a birthday gave it me,  
And I have broken with my father—  
take  
And wear it as memorial of a morning  
Which found me full of foolish  
doubts, and leaves me  
As hopeful.

*Renard (aside).* Whew—the folly  
of all follies  
Is to be lovesick for a shadow.  
(*Aloud.*) Madam,  
This chains me to your service, not  
with gold,  
But dearest links of love. Farewell,  
and trust me,  
Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]

*Mary.* Mine—but not yet all mine.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Your Council is in session,  
please your Majesty.

*Mary.* Sir, let them sit. I must have  
time to breathe.  
No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won  
by boldness once.  
The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to  
Flanders.  
I would not; but a hundred miles I  
rode,  
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends  
together,  
Struck home and won.  
And when the Council would not  
crown me—thought  
To bind me first by oaths I could not  
keep,  
And keep with Christ and conscience  
—was it boldness  
Or weakness that won there? when I,  
their Queen,  
Cast myself down upon my knees be-  
fore them,  
And those hard men brake into  
woman-tears,  
Even Gardiner, all amazed, and in  
that passion  
Gave me my Crown.

*Enter ALICE.*

Girl, hast thou ever heard  
Slanders against Prince Philip in our  
Court?

*Alice.* What slanders? I, your  
Grace? no, never.

*Mary.* Nothing?

*Alice.* Never, your Grace.

*Mary.* See that you neither hear  
them nor repeat!

*Alice (aside).* Good Lord! but I  
have heard a thousand such—  
Ay, and repeated them as often—  
mum!  
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back  
again?

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* Madam, I scarce had left  
your Grace's presence  
Before I chanced upon the messenger  
Who brings that letter which we  
waited for—  
The formal offer of Prince Philip's  
hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.  
*Mary.* An instant Ay or No! the  
 Council sits.

Give it me quick.

*Alice* (*stepping before her*). Your  
 Highness is all trembling.

*Mary.* Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

*Alice.* O Master Renard, Master  
 Renard,

If you have falsely painted your fine  
 Prince,

Praised where you should have blamed  
 him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Re-  
 nard!

It breaks my heart to hear her moan  
 at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her  
 bed.

*Renard.* My pretty maiden, tell me,  
 did you ever

Sigh for a beard?

*Alice.* That's not a pretty question.

*Renard.* Not prettily put? I mean,  
 my pretty maiden,

A pretty man for such a pretty  
 maiden.

*Alice.* My Lord of Devon is a pretty  
 man.

I hate him. Well, but if I have, what  
 then?

*Renard.* Then, pretty maiden, you  
 should know that whether

A wind be warm or cold, it serves to  
 fan

A kindled fire.

*Alice.* According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed  
 'em,

His foes would blame him, and I  
 scorn'd 'em,

His friends—as angels I received 'em,

His foes—the devil had suborn'd 'em.

*Renard.* Peace, pretty maiden.

I hear them stirring in the Council  
 Chamber.

Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure—who else?  
 and yet,

They are all too much at odds to close  
 at once

In one full-throated No! Her High-  
 ness comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Alice.* How deathly pale!—a chair,  
 your Highness.

[*Bringing one to the Queen.*]

*Renard.* Madam,  
 The Council?

*Mary.* Ay! My Philip is all mine.  
 [*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*]

## ACT II

### SCENE I.—ALINGTON CASTLE

*Sir Thomas Wyatt.* I do not hear  
 from Carew or the Duke  
 Of Suffolk, and till then I should not  
 move.

The Duke hath gone to Leicester;  
 Carew stirs

In Devon; that fine porcelain Courte-  
 nay,

Save that he fears he might be crack'd  
 in using—

I have known a semi-madman in my  
 time

So fancy-ridden—should be in Devon  
 too.

*Enter WILLIAM.*

News abroad, William?

*William.* None so new, Sir Thomas,  
 and none so old, Sir Thomas. No new  
 news that Philip comes to wed Mary,  
 no old news that all men hate it. Old  
 Sir Thomas would have hated it. The  
 bells are ringing at Maidstone. Does  
 n't your worship hear?

*Wyatt.* Ay, for the Saints are come  
 to reign again.

Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's  
 no call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before  
 The mine be fired, it were a pious  
 work

To string my father's sonnets, left  
 about

Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair order,

And head them with a lamer rhyme of mine,

To grace his memory.

*William.* Ay, why not, Sir Thomas? He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne loved him. All the women loved him. I loved him, I was in Spain with him. I could n't eat in Spain, I could n't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* But thou couldst drink in Spain if I remember.

*William.* Sir Thomas, we may grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted the wine.

*Wyatt.* Hand me the casket with my father's sonnets.

*William.* Ay—sonnets—a fine courtier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas. *[Exit.]*

*Wyatt.* Courtier of many courts, he loved the more  
His own gray towers, plain life, and letter'd peace,

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,  
The lark above, the nightingale below,  
And answer them in song. The sire begets

Not half his likeness in the son. I fail  
Where he was fullest. Yet—to write it down. *[He writes.]*

*Re-enter WILLIAM.*

*William.* There is news, there is news, and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for sonnet-making either, but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

*Wyatt.* Inverted Æsop—mountain out of mouse.  
Say for ten thousand ten—and pot-house knaves,  
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

*Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.*

*William.* Here's Antony Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Look you, Master Wyatt, Tear up that woman's work there.

*Wyatt.* No; not these, Dumb children of my father, that will speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie  
Dead bodies without voice. Song flies, you know,

For ages.

*Knyvett.* Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant,

Wing'd for a moment.

*Wyatt.* Well, for mine own work, *[Tearing the paper.]*

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;  
For all that, I can carry it in my head.

*Knyvett.* If you can carry your head upon your shoulders.

*Wyatt.* I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders,

And sonnet-making's safer.

*Knyvett.* Why, good lord, Write you as many sonnets as you will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears, brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,

Come locusting upon us, eat us up, Confiscate lands, goods, money—

*Wyatt, Wyatt,*

Wake, or the stout old island will become

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them—more—

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no glory

Like his who saves his country. And you sit

Sing-singing here; but, if I'm any judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet, *Wyatt,*

As a good soldier.

*Wyatt.* You as poor a critic

As an honest friend; you stroke me  
on one cheek,  
Buffet the other. Come, you bluster,  
Antony!

You know I know all this. I must not  
move

Until I hear from Carew and the  
Duke.

I fear the mine is fired before the  
time.

*Knyvett (showing a paper).* But  
here's some Hebrew. Faith, I  
half forgot it.

Look—can you make it English? A  
strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd,  
'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd  
his back

Before I read his face.

*Wyatt.* Ha! Courtenay's cipher.  
[*Reads.*

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France; it  
is thought the Duke will be taken. I  
am with you still; but, for appear-  
ances sake, stay with the Queen.  
Gardiner knows, but the Council are  
all at odds, and the Queen hath no  
force for resistance. Move, if you  
move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke  
taken?

Down scabbard, and out sword! and  
let Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall!  
No, not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how to  
reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

*Knyvett.* Why, some fifty  
That follow'd me from Penenden  
Heath in hope

To hear you speak.

*Wyatt.* Open the window, Knyvett;  
The mine is fired, and I will speak to  
them.

Men of Kent, England of England,  
you that have kept your old customs  
upright, while all the rest of England  
bowed theirs to the Norman, the cause

that hath brought us together is not  
the cause of a county or a shire, but  
of this England, in whose crown our  
Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall  
not wed Mary; and ye have called me  
to be your leader. I know Spain. I  
have been there with my father; I  
have seen them in their own land,  
have marked the haughtiness of their  
nobles, the cruelty of their priests. If  
this man marry our Queen, however  
the Council and the Commons may  
fence round his power with restric-  
tion, he will be King, King of Eng-  
land, my masters; and the Queen, and  
the laws, and the people, his slaves.  
What? shall we have Spain on the  
throne and in the parliament; Spain  
in the pulpit and on the law-bench;  
Spain in all the great offices of state;  
Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our  
houses, in our beds?

*Crowd.* No! no! no Spain!

*William.* No Spain in our beds—  
that were worse than all. I have been  
there with old Sir Thomas, and the  
beds I know. I hate Spain.

*A Peasant.* But, Sir Thomas, must  
we levy war against the Queen's  
Grace?

*Wyatt.* No, my friend; war for the  
Queen's Grace—to save her from her-  
self and Philip—war against Spain.  
And think not we shall be alone—  
thousands will flock to us. The Coun-  
cil, the Court itself, is on our side.  
The Lord Chancellor himself is on our  
side. The King of France is with us;  
the King of Denmark is with us; the  
world is with us—war against Spain!  
And if we move not now, yet it will  
be known that we have moved; and if  
Philip come to be King, O my God!  
The rope, the rack, the thumbscrew,  
the stake, the fire. If we move not  
now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles  
with her gold, and creeps, creeps  
snake-like about our legs till we can-  
not move at all; and ye know, my  
masters, that wherever Spain hath  
ruled she hath wither'd all beneath  
her. Look at the New World—a para-

dise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more—only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

*Crowd.* Forward to London! A Wyatt! a Wyatt!

*Wyatt.* But first to Rochester, to take the guns  
From out the vessels lying in the river.  
Then on.

*A Peasant.* Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,  
Is not half-waked; but every parish tower  
Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,  
And pour along the land, and, swollen and fed  
With indraughts and side-currents, in full force  
Roll upon London.

*Crowd.* A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

*Knyvett.* Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

*Wyatt.* I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Or Lady Jane?

*Wyatt.* No, poor soul, no.

Ah, gray old castle Alington, green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

*Knyvett.* Come, now, you're sonnetting again

*Wyatt.* Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the State;

Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

GUILDHALL

SIR THOMAS WHITE (*The Lord Mayor*), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

*White.* I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

*Howard.* Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*]

Why do they hurry out there?

*White.* My lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in John

Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here?

*Howard.* In some few minutes. She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man

This day in England.

*White.* I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

*Howard.* You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him

With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her marriage—

Know too what Wyatt said.

*White.* He'd sooner be.



While this same marriage question  
was being argued,  
Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—  
and demanded  
Possession of her person and the  
Tower.

*Howard.* And four of her poor  
Council too, my Lord,  
As hostages.

*White.* I know it. What do and say  
Your Council at this hour?

*Howard.* I will trust you.  
We fling ourselves on you, my Lord.  
The Council,

The Parliament as well, are troubled  
waters;

And yet like waters of the fen they  
know not

Which way to flow. All hands on her  
address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

*White.* How look'd the city  
When now you past it? Quiet?

*Howard.* Like our Council,  
Your city is divided. As we past,  
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There  
were citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth,  
and look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral.  
And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,

With execrating execrable eyes,  
Glared at the citizen. Here was a

young mother,  
Her face on flame, her red hair all

blown back,  
She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy

she held  
Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as

red as she  
In hair and cheek; and almost elbow-

ing her,  
So close they stood, another, mute as

death,  
And white as her own milk; her babe

in arms  
Had felt the faltering of his mother's

heart,  
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious

Catholic,  
Mumbling and mixing up in his scared

prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries; over his  
bow'd shoulder

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-  
hating beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such  
groups.

The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth,  
Courtenay,

Nay, the Queen's right to reign—'fore  
God, the rogues!—

Were freely buzz'd among them. So I  
say

Your city is divided, and I fear  
One scruple, this or that way, of suc-

cess  
Would turn it thither. Wherefore now

the Queen,  
In this low pulse and palsy of the

state,  
Bade me to tell you that she counts

on you  
And on myself as her two hands; on

you,  
In your own city, as her right, my

lord,  
For you are loyal.

*White.* Am I Thomas White?  
One word before she comes. Eliza-

beth—  
Her name is much abused among

these traitors.  
Where is she? She is loved by all of

us.  
I scarce have heart to mingle in this

matter,  
If she should be mishandled.

*Howard.* No, she shall not.  
The Queen had written her word to

come to court:  
Methought I smelt out Renard in the

letter,  
And fearing for her, sent a secret mis-

sive,  
Which told her to be sick. Happily or

not,  
It found her sick indeed.

*White.* God send her well!  
Here comes her Royal Grace.

*Enter GUARDS, MARY, and GARDINER.*  
SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a  
raised seat on the dais.

*White.* I, the Lord Mayor, and  
these our companies  
And guilds of London, gathered here,  
beseech  
Your Highness to accept our lowliest  
thanks  
For your most princely presence; and  
we pray  
That we, your true and loyal citizens,  
From your own royal lips, at once  
may know  
The wherefore of this coming, and so  
learn  
Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord  
Mayor  
Of London, and our guilds and com-  
panies.

*Mary.* In mine own person am I  
come to you,  
To tell you what indeed ye see and  
know,  
How traitorously these rebels out of  
Kent  
Have made strong head against our-  
selves and you.  
They would not have me wed the  
Prince of Spain;  
That was their pretext—so they spake  
at first—  
But we sent divers of our Council to  
them,  
And by their answers to the question  
ask'd,  
It doth appear this marriage is the  
least  
Of all their quarrel.  
They have betrayed the treason of  
their hearts,  
Seek to possess our person, hold our  
Tower,  
Place and displace our councillors,  
and use  
Both us and them according as they  
will.  
Now what I am ye know right well—  
your Queen;  
To whom, when I was wedded to the  
realm  
And the realm's laws—the spousal  
ring whereof,  
Not ever to be laid aside, I wear  
Upon this finger—ye did promise full  
Allegiance and obedience to the death.

Ye know my father was the rightful  
heir  
Of England, and his right came down  
to me,  
Corroborate by your acts of Parlia-  
ment.  
And as ye were most loving unto him,  
So doubtless will ye show yourselves  
to me.  
Wherefore, ye will not brook that any  
one  
Should seize our person, occupy our  
state,  
More specially a traitor so presump-  
tuous  
As this same Wyatt, who hath tam-  
per'd with  
A public ignorance, and, under color  
Of such a cause as hath no color, seeks  
To bend the laws to his own will, and  
yield  
Full scope to persons rascal and for-  
lorn,  
To make free spoil and havoc of your  
goods.  
Now, as your Prince, I say,  
I, that was never mother, cannot tell  
How mothers love their children; yet,  
methinks,  
A prince as naturally may love his  
people  
As these their children; and be sure  
your Queen  
So loves you, and so loving, needs  
must deem  
This love by you return'd as heartily;  
And thro' this common knot and bond  
of love,  
Doubt not they will be speedily over-  
thrown.  
As to this marriage, ye shall under-  
stand  
We made thereto no treaty of our-  
selves,  
And set no foot theretoward unad-  
vised  
Of all our Privy Council; further-  
more,  
This marriage had the assent of those  
to whom  
The King, my father, did commit his  
trust;  
Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,

But for the wealth and glory of our realm,  
 And all our loving subjects, most expedient.  
 As to myself,  
 I am not so set on wedlock as to choose  
 But where I list, nor yet so amorous  
 That I must needs be husbanded; I thank God,  
 I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt  
 But that, with God's grace, I can live so still.  
 Yet if it might please God that I should leave  
 Some fruit of mine own body after me,  
 To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,  
 And it would be your comfort, as I trust;  
 And truly, if I either thought or knew  
 This marriage should bring loss or danger to you,  
 My subjects, or impair in any way  
 This royal state of England, I would never  
 Consent thereto, nor marry while I live.  
 Moreover, if this marriage should not seem,  
 Before our own High Court of Parliament,  
 To be of rich advantage to our realm,  
 We will refrain, and not alone from this,  
 Likewise from any other, out of which  
 Looms the least chance of peril to our realm.  
 Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful Prince  
 Stand fast against our enemies and yours,  
 And fear them not. I fear them not.  
 My lord,  
 I leave Lord William Howard in your city,  
 To guard and keep you whole and safe from all  
 The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the Prince of Spain.

*Voices.* Long live Queen Mary!  
 Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

*White.* Three voices from our guilds and companies!

You are shy and proud like Englishmen, my masters,

And will not trust your voices. Understand,

Your lawful Prince hath come to cast herself

On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall

Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,  
 And finds you statues. Speak at once—and all!

For whom?

Our Sovereign Lady by King Harry's will,

The Queen of England—or the Kentish Squire?

I know you loyal. Speak! in the name of God!

The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace!

Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade—

Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush—

Your houses fired—your gutters bubbling blood—

*Acclamation.* No! No! The Queen! the Queen!

*White.* Your Highness hears

This burst and bass of loyal harmony,  
 And how we each and all of us abhor

The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt  
 Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make

oath

To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,

And arm and strike as with one hand,  
 and brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea

That might have leapt upon us un-  
 awares.

Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens,  
 all,

With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

*Citizens.* We swear!

*Mary.* We thank your lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary, attended.*]

*White.* I trust this day, thro' God, I have saved the crown.

*First Alderman.* Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command

Of all her force be safe; but there are doubts.

*Second Alderman.* I hear that Gardiner coming with the Queen,

And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him. Is he so safe to fight upon her side?

*First Alderman.* If not, there's no man safe.

*White.* Yes, Thomas White.

I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

*Second Alderman.* Nay, no man need; but did you mark our Queen?

The color freely play'd into her face, And the half sight which makes her look so stern

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers

To read our faces; I have never seen her

So queenly or so goodly.

*White.* Courage, sir, That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

*Bagenhall.* The man had children, and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else

Should we so dote on courage, were it commoner?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

*White.* Goodly? I feel most goodly, heart and hand,

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it. A jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.

Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself,

Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

*Bagenhall.* Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.

*White.* The man should make the hour, not this the man;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,

And he will play the Walworth to this Wat.

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—gather your men—

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit White.*]

*Bagenhall.* One of much outdoor bluster.

*Howard.* For all that,

Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms—his fault

So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

*Bagenhall.* Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,

So one's own self be thorough, were to do

Great things, my lord.

*Howard.* It may be.

*Bagenhall.* I have heard

One of your Council flee and jeer at him.

*Howard.* The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery.

The statesman that shall jeer and flee at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his king;

And if he jeer, not seeing the true man Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;

And if he see the man and still will jeer,

He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

*Bagenhall.* Nay, my lord,

He is damn'd enough already.

*Howard.* I must set

The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.

*Bagenhall.* 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,

That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,

Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen? *[Exeunt.]*

### SCENE III

#### LONDON BRIDGE

*Enter* SIR THOMAS WYATT *and* BRETT.

*Wyatt.* Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us Thou criest 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can give,

For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

*Brett.* Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

*Wyatt.* Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett, And scared the gray old porter and his wife.

And then I crept along the gloom and saw

They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths. Had Howard spied me there

And made them speak, as well he might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you this.

What shall we do?

*Brett.* On somehow. To go back Were to lose all.

*Wyatt.* On over London Bridge We cannot; stay we cannot; there is ordnance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark. We must round

By Kingston Bridge.

*Brett.* Ten miles about.

*Wyatt.* Even so.

But I have notice from our partisans Within the city that they will stand by us

If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-morrow.

*Enter one of* WYATT'S *men.*

*Man.* Sir Thomas, I've found this paper; pray your worship read it; I know not my letters; the old priests taught me nothing.

*Wyatt (reads).* 'Whosoever will apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward.'

*Man.* Is that it? That's a big lot of money.

*Wyatt.* Ay, ay, my friend; not read it? 'tis not written  
Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper!

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*  
*There, any man can read that.*

[*Sticks it in his cap.*  
*Brett.* But that's foolhardy.

*Wyatt.* No! boldness, which will give my followers boldness.

*Enter MAN with a prisoner.*

*Man.* We found him, your worship, a-plundering o' Bishop Winchester's house; he says he's a poor gentleman.

*Wyatt.* Gentleman! a thief! Go hang him. Shall we make Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes?

*Brett.* Sir Thomas—

*Wyatt.* Hang him, I say.

*Brett.* Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.

*Wyatt.* Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life.

*Brett.* Even so; he was my neighbor once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he was. We have been glad together; let him live.

*Wyatt.* He has gambled for his life and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my sight,

Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away!

Women and children!

*Enter a CROWD of WOMEN and CHILDREN.*

*First Woman.* O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us; and you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spitting,

and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

*Second Woman.* Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

*Third Woman.* No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen

Or here or there; I come to save you all,

And I'll go further off.

*Crowd.* Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

*Wyatt.* Be happy, I am your friend To Kingston, forward!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WESTMINSTER PALACE

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

*Gardiner.* Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

*Mary.* Lord Pembroke in command of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

*Alice.* Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?

O madam, if this Pembroke should be false!

*Mary.* No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.

His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.

At the park gate he hovers with our guards.

These Kentish plowmen cannot break the guards.

*Enter MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards And gone to Ludgate.

*Gardiner.* Madam, I much fear That all is lost; but we can save your Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech you,

There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

*Mary.* I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

*Gardiner.* Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

*Mary.* I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

*Cries without.* The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

*Ladies.* Treason! treason!

*Mary.* Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false to me?

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die

The true and faithful bride of Philip —A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither—blows—

Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

*Ladies.* No, no, your Grace; see there the arrows flying.

*Mary.* I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk into corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious guard

Truly; shame on them! they have shut the gates!

*Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.*

*Southwell.* The porter, please your Grace, hath shut the gates

On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-arms,

If this be not your Grace's order, cry To have the gates set wide again, and they

With their good battle-axes will do you right

Against all traitors.

*Mary.* They are the flower of England; set the gates wide.

[*Exit Southwell.*]

*Enter COURTENAY.*

*Courtenay.* All lost, all lost, all yielded! A barge, a barge!

The Queen must to the Tower.

*Mary.* Whence come you, sir?

*Courtenay.* From Charing Cross; the rebels broke us there,

And I sped hither with what haste I might

To save my royal cousin.

*Mary.* Where is Pembroke?

*Courtenay.* I left him somewhere in the thick of it.

*Mary.* Left him and fled; and thou that wouldst be King,

And hast nor heart nor honor! I myself

Will down into the battle and there bide

The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those

That are no cowards and no Courtenays.

*Courtenay.* I do not love your Grace should call me coward.

*Enter another MESSENGER.*

*Messenger.* Over, your Grace, all crush'd; the brave Lord William

Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor flying

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice Berkeley

Was taken prisoner.

*Mary.* To the Tower with *him*!

*Messenger.* 'Tis said he told Sir Maurice there was one

Cognizant of this, and party there-  
unto,  
My Lord of Devon.

*Mary.* To the Tower with *him!*

*Courtenay.* O la, the Tower, the  
Tower, always the Tower,  
I shall grow into it—I shall be the  
Tower.

*Mary.* Your lordship may not have  
so long to wait.

Remove him!

*Courtenay.* La, to whistle out my  
life,

And carve my coat upon the walls  
again!

[*Exit Courtenay, guarded.*

*Messenger.* Also this Wyatt did  
confess the Princess

Cognizant thereof, and party there-  
unto.

*Mary.* What? whom—whom did  
you say?

*Messenger.* Elizabeth,  
Your royal sister.

*Mary.* To the Tower with *her!*  
My foes are at my feet, and I am  
Queen.

[*Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her.*

*Gardiner (rising).* There let them  
lie, your footstool! (*Aside.*)

Can I strike

Elizabeth?—not now and save the life  
Of Devon. If I save him, he and his  
Are bound to me—may strike here-  
after. (*Aloud.*) Madam,

What Wyatt said, or what they said  
he said,

Cries of the moment and the street—

*Mary.* He said it.

*Gardiner.* Your courts of justice  
will determine that.

*Renard (advancing).* I trust by this  
your Highness will allow  
Some spice of wisdom in my telling  
you,

When last we talk'd, that Philip would  
not come

Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke  
of Suffolk

And Lady Jane had left us.

*Mary.* They shall die.

*Renard.* And your so loving sister?

*Mary.* She shall die.

My foes are at my feet, and Philip  
King.

[*Exeunt.*

# ACT III

## SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN GRACE- CHURCH

*Painted with the Nine Worthies,  
among them King Henry VIII.  
holding a book, on it inscribed  
'Verbum Dei.'*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR  
THOMAS STAFFORD.*

*Bagenhall.* A hundred here and  
hundreds hang'd in Kent.

The tigress had unsheath'd her nails  
at last,

And Renard and the Chancellor  
sharpen'd them.

In every London street a gibbet stood.  
They are down to-day. Here by this  
house was one;

The traitor husband dangled at the  
door,

And when the traitor wife came out  
for bread

To still the petty treason therewithin,  
Her cap would brush his heels.

*Stafford.* It is Sir Ralph,  
And muttering to himself as hereto-  
fore.

Sir, see you aught up yonder?

*Bagenhall.* I miss something.

The tree that only bears dead fruit is  
gone.

*Stafford.* What tree, sir?

*Bagenhall.* Well, the tree in Virgil,  
sir,

That bears not its own apples.

*Stafford.* What! the gallows?

*Bagenhall.* Sir, this dead fruit was  
ripening overmuch,

And had to be removed lest living  
Spain

Should sicken at dead England.

*Stafford.* Not so dead

But that a shock may rouse her.

*Bagenhall.* I believ



Sir Thomas Stafford?

*Stafford.* I am ill disguised.

*Bagenhall.* Well, are you not in peril here?

*Stafford.* I think so.

I came to feel the pulse of England, whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?

*Bagenhall.* Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall  
Been reading some old book, with mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it; yet I saw it.

*Stafford.* Good, was it splendid?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, if dukes, and earls, And counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,

Some six or seven bishops, diamonds, pearls,

That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,

Could make it so.

*Stafford.* And what was Mary's dress?

*Bagenhall.* Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

*Stafford.* Red shoes!

*Bagenhall.* Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

*Stafford.* Were your eyes So bashful that you look'd no higher?

*Bagenhall.* A diamond, And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,

Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true one,

Blazed false upon her heart.

*Stafford.* But this proud Prince—

*Bagenhall.* Nay, he is King, you know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples that the son, Being a King, might wed a Queen—O,

he  
Flamed in brocade—white satin his trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down from this

The Golden Fleece—and round his knee, misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with great emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you had enough

Of all this gear?

*Stafford.* Ay, since you hate the telling it.

How look'd the Queen?

*Bagenhall.* No fairer for her jewels. And I could see that as the new-made couple

Came from the Minster, moving side by side

Beneath a canopy, ever and anon She cast on him a vassal smile of love,

Which Philip with a glance of some distaste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

*Stafford.* I think with you. The King of France will help to break it.

*Bagenhall.* France!

We once had half of France, and hurl'd our battles

Into the heart of Spain; but England now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops. Harry of Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,

And leave the people naked to the Crown,

And the Crown naked to the people; the Crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen

Can save us. We are fallen, and, as I think,

Never to rise again.

*Stafford.* You are too black-blooded.  
I'd make a move myself to hinder  
that;

I know some lusty fellows there in  
France.

*Bagenhall.* You would but make us  
weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he  
fail'd,

And strengthen'd Philip.

*Stafford.* Did not his last breath  
Clear Courtenay and the Princess  
from the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, but then  
What such a one as Wyatt says is  
nothing;

We have no men among us. The new  
lords

Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-  
lands,

And even before the Queen's face  
Gardiner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith,  
no courage!

Why, even the haughty prince, North-  
umberland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt  
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the  
scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to  
Rome.

*Stafford.* I swear you do your coun-  
try wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,  
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and  
spit it out

At Philip's beard; they pillage Spain  
already.

The French King winks at it. An hour  
will come

When they will sweep her from the  
seas. No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true  
man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true  
man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are  
black-blooded;

And I, by God, believe myself a man.  
Ay, even in the church there is a  
man—

Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade  
him fly.

And what a letter he wrote against  
the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

*Bagenhall.* Ay; if it hold.

*Crowd (coming on).* God save their  
Graces!

*Stafford.* Bagenhall, I see  
The Tudor green and white. (*Trum-*  
*pets.*) They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as her-  
ring-shoals.

*Bagenhall.* Be limpets to this pillar.  
or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

*Crowd.* God save their Graces!

*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelin-*  
*men, etc.; then Spanish and Flem-*  
*ish Nobles intermingled.*

*Stafford.* Worth seeing, Bagenhall!  
These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the  
long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

*Bagenhall.* The Duke  
Of Alva, an iron soldier.

*Stafford.* And the Dutchman,  
Now laughing at some jest?

*Bagenhall.* William of Orange,  
William the Silent.

*Stafford.* Why do they call him so?

*Bagenhall.* He keeps, they say, some  
secret that may cost

Philip his life.

*Stafford.* But then he looks so  
merry.

*Bagenhall.* I cannot tell you why  
they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, at-*  
*tended by Peers of the Realm,*  
*Officers of State, etc. Cannon*  
*shot off.*

*Crowd.* Philip and Mary, Philip and  
Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip  
and Mary!

*Stafford.* They smile as if content  
with one another.

*Bagenhall.* A smile abroad is oft a  
scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*]

*First Citizen.* I thought this Philip  
had been one of those black devils of  
Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

*Second Citizen.* Not red like Is-  
cariot's.

*First Citizen.* Like a carrot's, as  
thou say'st, and English carrot's bet-  
ter than Spanish licorice; but I  
thought he was a beast.

*Third Citizen.* Certain I had heard  
that every Spaniard carries a tail like  
a devil under his trunk-hose.

*Tailor.* Ay, but see what trunk-  
hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never  
stitch'd none such. They make amends  
for the tails.

*Fourth Citizen.* Tut! every Spanish  
priest will tell you that all English  
heretics have tails.

*Fifth Citizen.* Death and the devil  
—if he find I have one—

*Fourth Citizen.* Lo! thou hast call'd  
them up! here they come—a pale  
horse for Death, and Gardiner for the  
devil.

*Enter GARDINER (turning back from  
the procession).*

*Gardiner.* Knave, wilt thou wear  
thy cap before the Queen?

*Man.* My lord, I stand so squeezed  
among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

*Gardiner.* Knock off his cap there,  
some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their  
hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

*Man.* No, my lord, no.

*Gardiner.* Thy name, thou knave?

*Man.* I am nobody, my lord.

*Gardiner (shouting).* God's pas-  
sion! knave, thy name?

*Man.* I have ears to hear.

*Gardiner.* Ay, rascal, if I leave thee  
ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to  
Attendant*).

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Knave, thou shalt lose  
thine ears and find thy tongue,  
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee  
that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*  
The conduit painted—the Nine  
Worthies—ay!

But then what's here? King Harry  
with a scroll.

Ha—*Verbum Dei*—*verbum*—Word  
of God!

God's passion! do you know the knave  
that painted it?

*Attendant.* I do, my lord.

*Gardiner.* Tell him to paint it out,  
And put some fresh device in lieu of  
it—

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir;  
ha?

There is no heresy there.

*Attendant.* I will, my lord;  
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I  
am sure—

Knowing the man—he wrought it ig-  
norantly,

And not from any malice.

*Gardiner.* Word of God  
In English! over this the brainless  
loons

That cannot spell Esaias from Saint  
Paul,

Make themselves drunk and mad, fly  
out and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their Bibles  
burnt.

The Bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow,  
what!

Stand staring at me! shout, you gap-  
ing rogue!

*Man.* I have, my lord, shouted till  
I am hoarse.

*Gardiner.* What hast thou shouted,  
knave?

*Man.* Long live Queen Mary!

*Gardiner.* Knave, there be two.

There be both King and Queen,  
Philip and Mary. Shout!

*Man.* Nay, but my lord,  
The Queen comes first, Mary and  
Philip.

*Gardiner.* Shout, then,  
Mary and Philip!

*Man.* Mary and Philip!

*Gardiner.* Now,  
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure,  
shout for mine!

Philip and Mary!

*Man.* Must it be so, my lord?

*Gardiner.* Ay, knave.

*Man.* Philip and Mary.

*Gardiner.* I distrust thee.  
Thine is a half voice and a lean as-  
sent.

What is thy name?

*Man.* Sanders.

*Gardiner.* What else?

*Man.* Zerubbabel.

*Gardiner.* Where dost thou live?

*Man.* In Cornhill.

*Gardiner.* Where, knave, where?

*Man.* Sign of the Talbot.

*Gardiner.* Come to me to-mor-  
row.—

Rascal!—this land is like a hill of fire,  
One crater opens when another shuts.  
But so I get the laws against the  
heretic,

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord Wil-  
liam Howard,

And others of our Parliament, re-  
vived,

I will show fire on my side—stake and  
fire—

Sharp work and short. The knaves are  
easily cow'd.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*]

*Bagenhall.* As proud as Becket.

*Stafford.* You would not have him  
murder'd as Becket was?

*Bagenhall.* No—murder fathers  
murder; but I say

There is no man—there was one  
woman with us—

It was a sin to love her married, dead  
I cannot choose but love her.

*Stafford.* Lady Jane?

*Crowd (going off).* God save their  
Graces!

*Stafford.* Did you see her die?

*Bagenhall.* No, no; her innocent  
blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded—true  
enough,

Her dark, dead blood is in my heart  
with mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope  
Her dark, dead blood that ever moves  
with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make  
the cry.

*Stafford.* Yet doubtless you can tell  
me how she died?

*Bagenhall.* Seventeen—and knew  
eight languages—in music  
Peerless—her needle perfect, and her  
learning

Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek,  
so modest,

So wife-like humble to the trivial boy  
Mismatch'd with her for policy! I  
have heard

She would not take a last farewell of  
him;

She fear'd it might unman him for his  
end.

She could not be unmann'd—no, nor  
out-woman'd—

Seventeen—a rose of grace!

Girl never breathed to rival such a  
rose;

Rose never blew that equall'd such a  
bud.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* She came upon the scaf-  
fold,

And said she was condemn'd to die  
for treason;

She had but follow'd the device of  
those

Her nearest kin; she thought they  
knew the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little  
law,

And nothing of the titles to the crown;  
She had no desire for that, and wrung  
her hands,

And trusted God would save her thro'  
the blood

Of Jesus Christ alone.

*Stafford.* Pray you go on.

*Bagenhall.* Then knelt and said the  
Miserere Mei—

But all in English, mark you; rose  
again,

And, when the headsman pray'd to be forgiven,  
Said, You will give me my true crown at last,  
But do it quickly;' then all wept but she,

Who changed not color when she saw the block,  
But ask'd him, childlike, 'Will you take it off

Before I lay me down?' 'No, madam,' he said,

Gasping; and when her innocent eyes were bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling—'Where is it?

Where is it?'—You must fancy that which follow'd,

If you have heart to do it!

*Crowd (in the distance).* God save their Graces!

*Stafford.* Their Graces, our disgraces! God confound them!

Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last was here,

This was against her conscience—would be murder!

*Bagenhall.* The 'Thou shalt do no murder,' which God's hand

Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out pale—

She could not make it white—and over that,

Traced in the blackest text of hell—'Thou shalt!'

And sign'd it—Mary!

*Stafford.* Philip and the Pope Must have sign'd too. I hear this legate's coming

To bring us absolution from the Pope. The Lords and Commons will bow down before him—

You are of the house? what will you do, Sir Ralph?

*Bagenhall.* And why should I be bolder than the rest,

Or honestier than all?

*Stafford.* But, sir, if I—And over-sea they say this State of yours

Hath no more mortise than a tower of cards;

And that a puff would do it—then if I

And others made that move I touched upon,

Back'd by the power of France, and landing here,

Came with a sudden splendor, shout, and show,

And dazzled men and deafen'd by some bright

Loud venture, and the people so unquiet—

And I the race of murder'd Buckingham—

Not for myself, but for the kingdom—Sir,

I trust that you would fight along with us.

*Bagenhall.* No; you would fling your lives into the gulf.

*Stafford.* But if this Philip, as he's like to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone, Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads

hither To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make us

A Spanish province; would you not fight then?

*Bagenhall.* I think I should fight then.

*Stafford.* I am sure of it.

Hist! there's the face coming on here of one

Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare you well,

You'll hear of me again.

*Bagenhall.* Upon the scaffold.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

### ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE

MARY. *Enter* PHILIP and CARDINAL POLE.

*Pole.* Ave Maria, gratia plena, benedicta tu in mulieribus!

*Mary.* Loyal and royal cousin, humblest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

*Pole.* We had your royal barge, and  
that same chair,  
Or rather throne of purple, on the  
deck.  
Our silver cross sparkled before the  
prow,  
The ripples twinkled at their dia-  
mond-dance,  
The boats that follow'd were as glow-  
ing-gay  
As regal gardens, and your flocks of  
swans  
As fair and white as angels; and your  
shores  
Wore in mine eyes the green of Para-  
dise.  
My foreign friends, who dream'd us  
blanketed  
In ever-closing fog, were much  
amazed  
To find as fair a sun as might have  
flash'd  
Upon their lake of Garda fire the  
Thames;  
Our voyage by sea was all but mir-  
acle;  
And here the river flowing from the  
sea,  
Not toward it—for they thought not  
of our tides—  
Seem'd as a happy miracle to make  
glide—  
In quiet—home your banish'd coun-  
tryman.  
*Mary.* We heard that you were sick  
in Flanders, cousin.  
*Pole.* A dizziness.  
*Mary.* And how came you round  
again?  
*Pole.* The scarlet thread of Rahab  
saved her life;  
And mine, a little letting of the blood.  
*Mary.* Well? now?  
*Pole.* Ay, cousin, as the heathen  
giant  
Had but to touch the ground, his force  
return'd—  
Thus, after twenty years of banish-  
ment,  
Feeling my native land beneath my  
foot,  
I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of  
mine,

Thou art much beholden to this foot  
of mine,  
That hastes with full commission  
from the Pope  
To absolve thee from thy guilt of  
heresy.  
Thou hast disgraced me and attained  
me,  
And mark'd me even as Cain, and I  
return  
As Peter, but to bless thee; make me  
well.'  
Methinks the good land heard me, for  
today  
My heart beats twenty, when I see  
you, cousin.  
Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's  
death,  
How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's  
gate!  
And Mary would have risen and let  
him in,  
But, Mary, there were those within  
the house  
Who would not have it.  
*Mary.* True, good cousin Pole;  
And there were also those without  
the house  
Who would not have it.  
*Pole.* I believe so, cousin.  
State-policy and church-policy are  
conjoint,  
But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.  
I fear the Emperor much misvalued  
me.  
But all is well; 't was even the will of  
God,  
Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd,  
now  
Makes me His mouth of holy greet-  
ing, 'Hail,  
Daughter of God, and saver of the  
faith.  
Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!  
*Mary.* Ah, heaven!  
*Pole.* Unwell, your Grace?  
*Mary.* No, cousin, happy—  
Happy to see you; never yet so happy  
Since I was crown'd.  
*Pole.* Sweet cousin, you forget  
That long low minster where you gave  
your hand  
To this great Catholic King.

*Philip.* Well said, Lord Legate.

*Mary.* Nay, not well said; I thought of you, my liege,

Even as I spoke.

*Philip.* Ay, madam; my Lord Paget Waits to present our Council to the legate.

Sit down here, all; madam, between us you.

*Pole.* Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar,

Our little sister of the Song of Songs! You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's holiness

By mine own self.

*Mary.* True, cousin, I am happy.

When will you that we summon both our houses

To take this absolution from your lips,

And be re-gather'd to the Papal fold?

*Pole.* In Britain's calendar the brightest day

Beheld our rough forefathers break their gods,

And clasp the faith in Christ; but after that

Might not Saint Andrew's be her happiest day?

*Mary.* Then these shall meet upon Saint Andrew's Day.

*Enter PAGET, who presents the Council. Dumb show.*

*Pole.* I am an old man wearied with my journey,

Even with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.

To Lambeth?

*Philip.* Ay, Lambeth has ousted Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine should live

In Lambeth.

*Mary.* There or anywhere, or at all.

*Philip.* We have had it swept and garnish'd after him.

*Pole.* Not for the seven devils to enter in?

*Philip.* No, for we trust they parted in the swine.

*Pole.* True, and I am the Angel of the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

*Philip.* Nay, not here—to me; I will go with you to the waterside.

*Pole.* Not be my Charon to the counter side?

*Philip.* No, my Lord Legate, the Lord Chancellor goes.

*Pole.* And unto no dead world, but Lambeth Palace,

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*]

*Manet MARY.*

*Mary.* He hath awaked! he hath awaked!

He stirs within the darkness!

O Philip, husband! now thy love to mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-tied in my love.

The second Prince of Peace—

The great unborn defender of the Faith,

Who will avenge me of mine enemies—

He comes, and my star rises.

The stormy Wyatts and Northumberland,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth, And all her fieriest partisans—are pale

Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes and dies;

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade

Into the deathless hell which is their doom

Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind!

His sword shall hew the heretic peoples down!  
His faith shall clothe the world that will be his,  
Like universal air and sunshine!  
Open,  
Ye everlasting gates! The King is here!—  
My star, my son!

*Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.*

O, Philip, come with me!  
Good news have I to tell you, news to make  
Both of us happy—ay, the kingdom too.  
Nay, come with me—one moment!  
*Philip (to Alva)*. More than that;  
There was one here of late—William the Silent  
They call him—he is free enough in talk,  
But tells me nothing. You will be, we trust,  
Sometime the viceroy of those provinces—  
He must deserve his surname better.  
*Alva*. Ay, sir;  
Inherit the Great Silence.

*Philip*. True; the provinces  
Are hard to rule and must be hardly ruled;  
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,  
All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;  
And for their heresies, Alva, they will fight;  
You must break them or they break you.  
*Alva (proudly)*. The first.  
*Philip*. Good!  
Well, Madam, this new happiness of mine? [*Exeunt*].

*Enter THREE PAGES.*

*First Page*. News, mates! a miracle,  
a miracle! news!  
The bells must ring; Te Deums must be sung;  
The Queen hath felt the motion of her babe!

*Second Page*. Ay; but see here!

*First Page*. See what?

*Second Page*. This paper, Dickon.  
I found it fluttering at the palace gates:—

“The Queen of England is delivered of a dead dog!”

*Third Page*. These are the things that madden her. Fie upon it!

*First Page*. Ay; but I hear she hath a dropsy, lad,  
Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

*Third Page*. Fie on her dropsy, so she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

*First Page*. For thou and thine are Roman to the core.

*Third Page*. So thou and thine must be. Take heed!

*First Page*. Not I;  
And whether this flash of news be false or true,  
So the wine run, and there be revelry,  
Content am I. Let all the steeples clash,  
Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day. [*Exeunt*].

SCENE III

GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL

*At the far end a dais. On this three chairs, two under one canopy for MARY and PHILIP, another on the right of these for POLE. Under the dais on POLE's side, ranged along the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along the wall opposite all the Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other MEMBERS of the COMMONS.*

*First Member*. Saint Andrew's Day; sit close, sit close, we are friends.  
Is reconciled the word? the Pope again?



It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody!  
how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all of  
us

Against this foreign marriage, should  
have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger  
still that he,

So fierce against the headship of the  
Pope,

Should play the second actor in this  
pageant

That brings him in; such a chameleon  
he!

*Second Member.* This Gardiner  
turn'd his coat in Henry's  
time;

The serpent that hath slough'd will  
slough again.

*Third Member.* Tut, then we all  
are serpents.

*Second Member.* Speak for your-  
self.

*Third Member.* Ay, and for Gar-  
diner! being English citizen,  
How should he bear a bridegroom  
out of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being  
English churchman,

How should he bear the headship of  
the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen  
that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,  
To their own model.

*Second Member.* Statesmen that  
are wise

Take truth herself for model. What  
say you?

[*To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.*  
*Bagenhall.* We talk and talk.

*First Member.* Ay, and what use  
to talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's  
husband,

He's here, and King, or will be—yet,  
cocksbody!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of  
late;

My seven-years' friend was with me,  
my young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm  
behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the  
rogue

For infant treason.

*Third Member.* But they say that  
bees,

If any creeping life invade their hive  
Too gross to be thrust out, will build

him round,  
And bind him in from harming of  
their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound  
From stirring hand or foot to wrong

the realm.

*Second Member.* By bonds of bees-  
wax, like your creeping thing;  
But your wise bees had stung him  
first to death.

*Third Member.* Hush, hush!  
You wrong the Chancellor. The

clauses added  
To that same treaty which the Em-  
peror sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no for-  
eigner

Hold office in the household, fleet,  
forts, army;

That if the Queen should die without  
a child,

The bond between the kingdoms be  
dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any  
way

With his French wars—

*Second Member.* Ay, ay, but what  
security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

*Third Member.* Peace—the Queen,  
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*

*Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE*

[*Gardiner conducts them to the  
three chairs of state. Philip sits  
on the Queen's left, Pole on  
her right.*

*Gardiner.* Our short-lived sun, be-  
fore his winter plunge,  
Laughs at the last red loaf, and An-  
drew's Day.

*Mary.* Should not this day be held  
in after years

More solemn than of old?

*Philip.* Madam, my wish  
Echoes your Majesty's.

*Pole.* It shall be so.

*Gardiner.* Mine echoes both your  
Graces'; (*aside*) but the  
Pope—

Can we not have the Catholic Church  
as well

Without as with the Italian? if we  
cannot,

Why, then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,  
And ye, my masters, of the lower  
house,

Do ye stand fast by that which ye re-  
solved?

*Voices.* We do.

*Gardiner.* And be you all one mind  
to supplicate

The legate here for pardon, and  
acknowledge

The primacy of the Pope?

*Voices.* We are all one mind.

*Gardiner.* Then must I play the  
vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*

[*He draws a paper from under  
his robes and presents it to the  
King and Queen, who look  
through it and return it to  
him; then ascends a tribune,  
and reads.*

We, the Lords Spiritual and Tem-  
poral,

And Commons here in Parliament as-  
sembled,

Presenting the whole body of this  
realm

Of England, and dominions of the  
same,

Do make most humble suit unto your  
Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the  
State,

That by your gracious means and in-  
tercession

Our supplication be exhibited

To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here  
as legate

From our most Holy Father Julius,  
Pope,

And from the Apostolic See of Rome;  
And do declare our penitence and  
grief

For our long schism and disobedience,  
Either in making laws and ordinances  
Against the Holy Father's primacy,  
Or else by doing or by speaking aught  
Which might impugn or prejudice the  
same;

By this our supplication promising,  
As well for our own selves as all the  
realm,

That now we be and ever shall be  
quick,

Under and with your Majesties' au-  
thorities,

To do to the utmost all that in us lies  
Towards the abrogation and repeal

Of all such laws and ordinances made;  
Whereon we humbly pray your Maj-  
esties,

As persons undefiled with our offence,  
So to set forth this humble suit of  
ours

That we the rather by your interces-  
sion

May from the Apostolic See obtain,  
Thro' this most reverend father, abso-  
lution,

And full release from danger of all  
censures

Of Holy Church that we be fallen  
into,

So that we may, as children penitent,  
Be once again received into the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church;

And that this noble realm thro' after  
years

May in this unity and obedience  
Unto the holy see and reigning  
Pope

Serve God and both your Majesties.

*Voices.* Amen. [*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition  
to the King and Queen, who  
hand it reverentially to Pole.*

*Pole (sitting).* This is the loveliest  
day that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,  
incense-like,

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise  
of Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient  
fold.

Lo! once again God to this realm hath  
given

A token of His more especial grace;  
For as this people were the first of all  
The islands call'd into the dawning  
church

Out of the dead, deep night of hea-  
thendom,

So now are these the first whom God  
hath given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their  
schism;

And if your penitence be not mock-  
ery,

O, how the blessed angels who rejoice  
Over one saved do triumph at this  
hour

In the re-born salvation of a land  
So noble! [A pause.

For ourselves wo do protest  
That our commission is to heal, not  
harm;

We come not to condemn, but recon-  
cile;

We come not to compel, but call  
again;

We come not to destroy, but edify;  
Nor yet to question things already  
done;

These are forgiven—matters of the  
past—

And range with jetsam and with offal  
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[A pause.  
Ye have reversed the attainder laid  
on us

By him who sack'd the house of God;  
and we,

Amplifier than any field on our poor  
earth

Can render thanks in fruit for being  
sown,

Do here and now repay you sixty-  
fold,

A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-  
fold,

With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his  
hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph  
Bagenhall, who rises and re-  
mains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us  
With His own blood, and wash'd us  
from our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless  
bride;

He, whom the Father hath appointed  
Head

Of all His church, He by His mercy  
absolve you. [A pause.

And we by that authority Apostolic  
Given unto us, his legate, by the Pope,

Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,  
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon  
earth,

Do here absolve you and deliver you  
And every one of you, and all the  
realm

And its dominions from all heresy,  
All schism, and from all and every  
censure,

Judgment, and pain accruing there-  
upon;

And also we restore you to the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church.

[Turning to Gardiner.  
Our letters of commission will declare  
this plainlier.

[*Queen heard sobbing. Cries of  
Amen! Amen! Some of the  
Members embrace one an-  
other. All but Sir Ralph Bagen-  
hall pass out into the neighbor-  
ing chapel, whence is heard the  
Te Deum.*

Bagenhall. We strove against the  
papacy from the first,

In William's time, in our first Ed-  
ward's time,

And in my master Henry's time; but  
now,

The unity of Universal Church,  
Mary would have it; and this Gar-  
diner follows!

The unity of Universal Hell,  
Philip would have it; and this Gar-  
diner follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!  
 Sheep at the gap which Gardiner  
 takes, who not  
 Believes the Pope, nor any of them  
 believe—  
 These spaniel-Spaniard English of the  
 time,  
 Who rub their fawning noses in the  
 dust,  
 For that is Philip's gold-dust, and  
 adore  
 This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I  
 had been  
 Born Spaniard! I had held my head  
 up then.  
 I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,  
 English.

*Enter OFFICER*

*Officer.* Sir Ralph Bagenhall!  
*Bagenhall.* What of that?  
*Officer.* You were the one sole man  
 in either house  
 Who stood upright when both the  
 houses fell.  
*Bagenhall.* The houses fell!  
*Officer.* I mean the houses knelt  
 Before the legate.  
*Bagenhall.* Do not scrimp your  
 phrase,  
 But stretch it wider; say when Eng-  
 land fell.  
*Officer.* I say you were the one sole  
 man who stood.  
*Bagenhall.* I am the one sole man in  
 either house,  
 Perchance in England, loves her like  
 a son.  
*Officer.* Well, you one man, because  
 you stood upright,  
 Her Grace the Queen commands you  
 to the Tower.  
*Bagenhall.* As traitor, or as heretic,  
 or for what?  
*Officer.* If any man in any way  
 would be  
 The one man, he shall be so to his  
 cost.  
*Bagenhall.* What! will she have my  
 head?  
*Officer.* A round fine likelier.

Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*  
 By the river to the Tower.  
*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE IV

WHITEHALL. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET,  
 BONNER, *etc.*

*Mary.* The King and I, my lords,  
 now that all traitors  
 Against our royal state have lost the  
 heads  
 Wherewith they plotted in their trea-  
 sonous malice,  
 Have talk'd together, and are well  
 agreed  
 That those old statutes touching Lol-  
 lardism  
 To bring the heretic to the stake,  
 should be  
 No longer a dead letter, but re-quick-  
 en'd.  
*One of the Council.* Why, what hath  
 fluster'd Gardiner? how he  
 rubs  
 His forelock!  
*Paget.* I have changed a word with  
 him  
 In coming, and may change a word  
 again.  
*Gardiner.* Madam, your Highness  
 is our sun, the King  
 And you together our two suns in  
 one;  
 And so the beams of both may shine  
 upon us,  
 The faith that seem'd to droop will  
 feel your light,  
 Lift head, and flourish; yet not light  
 alone,  
 There must be heat—there must be  
 heat enough  
 To scorch and wither heresy to the  
 root.  
 For what saith Christ? 'Compel them  
 to come in.'  
 And what saith Paul? 'I would they  
 were cut off  
 That trouble you.' Let the dead letter  
 live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to  
whom  
Their A B C is darkness, clowns and  
grooms  
May read it! so you quash rebellion  
too,  
For heretic and traitor are all one;  
Two vipers of one breed—an amphis-  
bæna,  
Each end a sting. Let the dead letter  
burn!

*Paget.* Yet there be some disloyal  
Catholics,  
And many heretics loyal; heretic  
throats  
Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady  
Jane,  
But shouted in Queen Mary. So there  
be  
Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and  
cord.  
To take the lives of others that are  
loyal,  
And by the churchman's pitiless doom  
of fire,  
Were but a thankless policy in this  
crown,  
Ay, and against itself; for there are  
many.

*Mary.* If we could burn out heresy,  
my Lord Paget,  
We reck not tho' we lost this crown  
of England—  
Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

*Gardiner.* Right, your Grace.  
*Paget,* you are all for this poor life  
of ours,  
And care but little for the life to be.

*Paget.* I have some time, for curi-  
ousness, my lord,  
Watch'd children playing at *their* life  
to be,  
And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;  
Such is our time—all times for aught  
I know.

*Gardiner.* We kill the heretics that  
sting the soul—  
They, with right reason, flies that  
prick the flesh.

*Paget.* They had not reach'd right  
reason, little children!  
They kill'd but for their pleasure and  
the power

They felt in killing.

*Gardiner.* A spice of Satan, ha!  
Why, good! what then? granted!—we  
are fallen creatures;  
Look to your Bible, *Paget!* we are  
fallen.

*Paget.* I am but of the laity, my  
lord bishop,  
And may not read your Bible, yet I  
found  
One day a wholesome scripture, 'Little  
children,  
Love one another.'

*Gardiner.* Did you find a scripture,  
'I come not to bring peace but a  
sword'? The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.  
*Paget,*  
You stand up here to fight for heresy,  
You are more than guess'd at as a  
heretic,  
And on the steep-up track of the true  
faith

Your lapses are far seen.

*Paget.* The faultless *Gardiner!*  
*Mary.* You brawl beyond the ques-  
tion; speak, lord legate!

*Pole.* Indeed, I cannot follow with  
your Grace;

Rather would say—the shepherd doth  
not kill  
The sheep that wander from his flock,  
but sends

His careful dog to bring them to the  
fold.

Look to the Netherlands, wherein  
have been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what  
end?

For yet the faith is not established  
there.

*Gardiner.* The end 's not come.

*Pole.* No—nor this way will  
come,  
Seeing there lie two ways to every  
end,

A better and a worse—the worse is  
here

To persecute, because to persecute  
Makes a faith hated, and is further-  
more

No perfect witness of a perfect faith

In him who persecutes. When men are  
tost

On tides of strange opinion, and not  
sure

Of their own selves, they are wroth  
with their own selves,

And thence with others; then, who  
lights the faggot?

Not the full faith, no, but the lurking  
doubt.

Old Rome, that first made martyrs in  
the Church,

Trembled for her own gods, for these  
were trembling—

But when did our Rome tremble?

*Paget.* Did she not  
In Henry's time and Edward's?

*Pole.* What, my lord!  
The Church on Peter's rock? never! I  
have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow  
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the  
pine—

The cataract shook the shadow. To  
my mind,

The cataract typed the headlong  
plunge and fall

Of heresy to the pit; the pine was  
Rome.

You see, my lords,  
It was the shadow of the Church that  
trembled;

Your church was but the shadow of a  
church,

Wanting the Papal mitre.

*Gardiner (muttering).* Here be  
tropes.

*Pole.* And tropes are good to clothe  
a naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.

*Gardiner.* Tropes again!  
*Pole.* You are hard to please. Then

without tropes, my lord,  
An overmuch severeness, I repeat,

When faith is wavering makes the  
waverer pass

Into more settled hatred of the doc-  
trines

Of those who rule, which hatred by  
and by

Involves the ruler—thus there springs  
to light.

That Centaur of a monstrous Com-  
monweal,

The traitor-heretic;—then tho' some  
may quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and  
fire,

And their strong torment bravely  
borne begets

An admiration and an indignation,  
And hot desire to imitate; so the

plague  
Of schism spreads. Were there but

three or four  
Of these misleaders, yet I would not

say  
Burn! and we cannot burn whole

towns; they are many,  
As my Lord Paget says.

*Gardiner.* Yet, my Lord Cardinal—  
*Pole.* I am your legate; please you

let me finish.  
Methinks that under our Queen's

regimen  
We might go softlier than with crim-  
son rowel

And streaming lash. When Herod-  
Henry first

Began to batter at your English  
Church,

This was the cause, and hence the  
judgment on her.

She seethed with such adulteries, and  
the lives

Of many among your churchmen were  
so foul

That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I  
would advise

That we should thoroughly cleanse  
the Church within

Before these bitter statutes be re-  
quicken'd

So after that when she once more is  
seen

White as the light, the spotless bride  
of Christ,

Like Christ himself on Tabor, pos-  
sibly

The Lutheran may be won to her  
again;

Till when, my lords, I counsel toler-  
ance.

*Gardiner.* What, if a mad dog bit  
your hand, my lord,

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Would you not chop the bitten finger  
off,  
Lest your whole body should madden  
with the poison?  
I would not, were I Queen, tolerate  
the heretic,  
No, not an hour. The ruler of a land  
Is bounden by his power and place to  
see  
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate  
them!  
Why? do they tolerate you? Nay,  
many of them  
Would burn—have burnt each other;  
call they not  
The one true faith a loathsome idol-  
worship?  
Beware, lord legate, of a heavier crime  
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,  
Lest men accuse you of indifference  
To all faiths, all religion; for you  
know  
Right well that you yourself have  
been supposed  
Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.  
*Pole (angered)*. But you, my lord,  
beyond all supposition,  
In clear and open day were congruent  
With that vile Cranmer in the ac-  
cursed lie  
Of good Queen Catharine's divorce—  
the spring  
Of all those evils that have flow'd  
upon us;  
For you yourself have truckled to the  
tyrant,  
And done your best to bastardize our  
Queen,  
For which God's righteous judgment  
fell upon you  
In your five years of imprisonment,  
my lord,  
Under young Edward. Who so bol-  
ster'd up  
The gross King's headship of the  
Church, or more  
Denied the Holy Father?  
*Gardiner*. Ha! what! eh?  
But you, my lord, a polish'd gentle-  
man,  
A bookman, flying from the heat and  
tussle,

You lived among your vines and  
oranges,  
In your soft Italy yonder! You were  
sent for,  
You were appeal'd to, but you still  
preferr'd  
Your learned leisure. As for what I  
did,  
I suffer'd and repented. You, lord,  
legate  
And cardinal-deacon, have not now to  
learn  
That even Saint Peter in his time of  
fear  
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my  
lord.  
*Pole*. But not for five-and-twenty  
years, my lord.  
*Gardiner*. Ha! good! it seems then  
I was summon'd hither  
But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,  
friend Bonner,  
And tell this learned legate he lacks  
zeal.  
The Church's evil is not as the King's,  
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The  
mad bite  
Must have the cautery—tell him—  
and at once.  
What wouldst thou do hadst thou his  
power, thou  
That layest so long in heretic bonds  
with me?  
Wouldst thou not burn and blast them  
root and branch?  
*Bonner*. Ay, after you, my lord.  
*Gardiner*. Nay, God's passion, be-  
fore me! speak!  
*Bonner*. I am on fire until I see  
them flame.  
*Gardiner*. Ay, the psalm-singing  
weavers, cobblers, scum—  
But this most noble prince Plantag-  
enet,  
Our good Queen's cousin—dallying  
overseas  
Even when his brother's nay, his noble  
mother's,  
Head fell—  
*Pole*. Peace, madman!  
Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not  
fathom.

Thou Christian bishop, thou Lord  
Chancellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine  
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me  
much ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at  
thee.

*Mary.* I come for counsel and ye  
give me feuds,

Like dogs that, set to watch their mas-  
ter's gate,

Fall, when the thief is even within the  
walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord  
Chancellor,

You have an old trick of offending us;  
And but that you are art and part

with us  
In purging heresy, well we might, for  
this

Your violence and much roughness to  
the legate,

Have shut you from our counsels.  
Cousin Pole,

You are fresh from brighter lands.  
Retire with me.

His Highness and myself—so you  
allow us—

Will let you learn in peace and pri-  
vacy

What power this cooler sun of Eng-  
land hath

In breeding godless vermin. And pray  
Heaven

That you may see according to our  
sight!

Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*

*Gardiner.* Pole has the Plantagenet  
face,

But not the force made them our  
mightiest kings.

Fine eyes—but melancholy, irreso-  
lute—

A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine  
beard.

But a weak mouth, an indetermi-  
nate—ha?

*Bonner.* Well, a weak mouth, per-  
chance.

*Gardiner.* And not like thine

To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or  
raw.

*Bonner.* I'd do my best, my Lord;  
but yet the legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the  
Church,

And if he go not with you—

*Gardiner.* Tut, Master Bishop,  
Our bashful legate, saw'st not how he  
flush'd?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,  
He 'll burn a diocese to prove his  
orthodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those  
times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or  
duck, or die;

I kept my head for use of Holy  
Church;

And see you, we shall have to dodge  
again,

And let the Pope trample our rights,  
and plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church  
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put  
in force,

And that his fan may thoroughly  
purge his floor.

*Bonner.* So then you hold the  
Pope—

*Gardiner.* I hold the Pope!  
What do I hold him? what do I hold  
the Pope?

Come, come, the morsel stuck—this  
Cardinal's fault—

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly  
for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,  
The Eternal Peter of the changeless  
chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred  
king of kings,

God upon earth! what more? what  
would you have?

Hence, let 's be gone.

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* Well that you be not gone,  
My lord. The Queen, most wroth at  
first with you,



Is now content to grant you full forgiveness,  
So that you crave full pardon of the legate.

I am sent to fetch you.

*Gardiner.* Doth Pole yield, sir, ha?  
Did you hear 'em? were you by?

*Usher.* I cannot tell you,  
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;  
And yet methinks he falters; their  
two Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin  
him,

So press on him the duty which as  
legate

He owes himself, and with such royal  
smiles—

*Gardiner.* Smiles that burn men.  
Bonner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change  
and change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doc-  
tors tell you,

At three-score years; then if we  
change at all

We needs must do it quickly; it is an  
age

Of brief life, and brief purpose, and  
brief patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry  
for it

If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend  
Cranmer,

Your more especial love, hath turn'd  
so often

He knows not where he stands, which,  
if this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let  
'em look to it,

Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and  
Latimer,

Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is  
come,

Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies  
Iræ,'

Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their  
sect.

I feel it but a duty—you will find in it  
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bon-  
ner,—

To test their sect. Sir, I attend the  
Queen

To crave most humble pardon—of  
her most  
Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-  
cousin. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE V

## WOODSTOCK

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

*Elizabeth.* So they have sent poor  
Courtenay over-sea.

*Lady.* And banish'd us to Wood-  
stock, and the fields.

The colors of our Queen are green and  
white;

These fields are only green, they make  
me gape.

*Elizabeth.* There's white-thorn, girl.

*Lady.* Ay, for an hour in May.  
But court is always May, buds out in  
masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and  
flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep  
us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

*Elizabeth.* Hard upon both.

[*Writes on the window with a  
diamond.*]

Much suspected, of me

Nothing proven can be.

Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

*Lady.* What hath your Highness  
written?

*Elizabeth.* A true rhyme.

*Lady.* Cut with a diamond; so to  
last like truth.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, if truth last.

*Lady.* But truth, they say, will out;  
So it must last. It is not like a word,  
That comes and goes in uttering.

*Elizabeth.* Truth, a word!  
The very Truth and very Word are  
one.

But truth of story, which I glanced at,  
girl,

Is like a word that comes from olden  
days,

And passes thro' the peoples; every  
tongue  
Alters it passing, till it spells and  
speaks  
Quite other than at first.

*Lady.* I do not follow.

*Elizabeth.* How many names, in the  
long sweep of time

That so foreshortens greatness, may  
but hang

On the chance mention of some fool  
that once

Brake bread with us, perhaps; and my  
poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield  
May split it for a spite.

*Lady.* God grant it last,  
And witness to your Grace's inno-  
cence,

Till doomsday melt it!

*Elizabeth.* Or a second fire,  
Like that which lately crackled under-  
foot

And in this very chamber, fuse the  
glass,

And char us back again into the dust  
We spring from. Never peacock  
against rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

*Lady.* And I got it.  
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to  
you—

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

*Elizabeth.* Or true to you?

*Lady.* Sir Henry Bedingfield!  
I will have no man true to me, your  
Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me?  
the clown!

*Elizabeth.* Out, girl! you wrong a  
noble gentleman.

*Lady.* For, like his cloak, his man-  
ners want the nap  
And gloss of court; but of this fire he  
says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilful-  
ness,

Only a natural chance.

*Elizabeth.* A chance—perchance  
One of those wicked wilfuls that men  
make,  
Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I  
know

They hunt my blood. Save for my  
daily range  
Among the pleasant fields of Holy  
Writ

I might despair. But there hath some  
one come;

The house is all in movement. Hence,  
and see. [*Exit Lady.*]

MILKMAID (*singing without*).

Shame upon you, Robin,

Shame upon you now!

Kiss me would you? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Daisies grow again,

Kingcups blow again,

And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Robin came behind me,

Kiss'd me well, I vow.

Cuff him could I? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Swallows fly again,

Cuckoos cry again,

And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,

Come and kiss me now;

Help it can I? with my hands

Milking the cow?

Ringdoves coo again,

All things woo again.

Come behind and kiss me milking the  
cow!

*Elizabeth.* Right honest and red-  
cheek'd; Robin was violent,

And she was crafty—a sweet violence,

And a sweet craft. I would I were a  
milkmaid,

To sing, love, marry, churn, brew,  
bake, and die,

Then have my simple headstone by  
the church,

And all things lived and ended hon-  
estly.

I could not if I would. I am Harry's  
daughter.

Gardiner would have my head. They  
are not sweet,

The violence and the craft that do di-  
vide

The world of nature; what is weak  
must lie.

The lion needs but roar to guard his  
     young;  
 The lapwing lies, says 'here' when  
     they are there.  
 Threaten the child, 'I'll scourge you  
     if you did it;'  
 What weapon hath the child, save his  
     soft tongue,  
 To say 'I did not'? and my rod's the  
     block.  
 I never lay my head upon the pillow  
 But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there  
     to-morrow?'  
 How oft the falling axe, that never  
     fell,  
 Hath shock'd me back into the day-  
     light truth  
 That it may fall to-day! Those damp,  
     black, dead  
 Nights in the Tower; dead—with the  
     fear of death  
 Too dead even for a death-watch!  
     Toll of a bell,  
 Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a  
     rat  
 Affrighted me, and then delighted me,  
 For there was life—And there was life  
     in death—  
 The little murder'd princes, in a pale  
     light,  
 Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd,  
     'Come away!  
 The civil wars are gone for evermore;  
 Thou last of all the Tudors, come  
     away!  
 With us is peace!' The last? It was a  
     dream;  
 I must not dream, not wink, but  
     watch. She has gone,  
 Maid Marian to her Robin—by and  
     by  
 Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by  
     night,  
 And make a morning outcry in the  
     yard;  
 But there's no Renard here to 'catch  
     her tripping.'  
 Catch me who can; yet, sometime I  
     have wish'd  
 That I were caught, and kill'd away  
     at once  
 Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,  
     Gardiner,

Went on his knees, and pray'd me to  
     confess  
 In Wyatt's business, and to cast my-  
     self  
 Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay,  
     when, my lord?  
 God save the Queen! My jailor—

*Enter* SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

*Bedingfield.* One, whose bolts  
 That jail you from free life, bar you  
     from death.  
 There haunt some Papist ruffians  
     hereabout  
 Would murder you.

*Elizabeth.* I thank you heartily, sir,  
 But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,  
 And God hath blest or cursed me with  
     a nose—

Your boots are from the horses.  
*Bedingfield.* Ay, my lady.  
 When next there comes a missive  
     from the Queen

It shall be all my study for one hour  
 To rose and lavender my horsiness,  
 Before I dare to glance upon your  
     Grace.

*Elizabeth.* A missive from the  
 Queen! last time she wrote,  
 I had like to have lost my life. It takes  
     my breath—

O God, sir, do you look upon your  
     boots,  
 Are you so small a man? Help me!  
     what think you,  
 Is it life or death?

*Bedingfield.* I thought not on my  
     boots;  
 The devil take all boots were ever  
     made  
 Since man went barefoot! See, I lay  
     it here,  
 For I will come no nearer to your  
     Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*]  
 And, whether it brings you bitter news  
     or sweet,  
 And God hath given your Grace a  
     nose or not,  
 I'll help you, if I may.

*Elizabeth.* Your pardon, then;

It is the heat and narrowness of the  
cage

That makes the captive testy; with  
free wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave  
me now,

Will you, companion to myself, sir?  
*Beddingfield.* Will I?

With most exceeding willingness, I  
will;

You know I never come till I be  
call'd. [*Exit.*]

*Elizabeth.* It lies there folded; is  
there venom in it?

A snake—and if I touch it, it may  
sting.

Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at  
once. [*Reads.*]

'It is the King's wish that you  
should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy.  
You are to come to Court on the in-  
stant; and think of this in your com-  
ing.

'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;  
I think there may be bird-lime here  
for me;

I think they fain would have me from  
the realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a  
child;

I think that I may be some time the  
Queen,

Then, Queen indeed; no foreign  
prince or priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon  
the steps.

I think I will not marry any one,  
Specially not this landless Philib-  
ert

Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,  
I think that I will play with Philib-  
ert,—

As once the Holy Father did with  
mine,

Before my father married my good  
mother,—

For fear of Spain.

*Enter* LADY.

*Lady.* O Lord! your Grace, Your  
Grace,

I feel so happy. It seems that we shall  
fly

These bald, blank fields, and dance  
into the sun

That shines on princes.

*Elizabeth.* Yet, a moment since,  
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing  
here,

To kiss and cuff among the birds and  
flowers—

A right rough life and healthful.

*Lady.* But the wench  
Hath her own troubles; she is weep-  
ing now;

For the wrong Robin took her at her  
word.

Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk  
was spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

*Elizabeth.* I had kept  
My Robins and my cows in sweeter  
order

Had I been such.

*Lady (slyly).* And had your Grace  
a Robin?

*Elizabeth.* Come, come, you are  
chill here; you want the sun  
That shines at court; make ready for  
the journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke!  
Ready at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM  
HOWARD.

*Petre.* You cannot see the Queen.  
Renard denied her  
Even now to me.

*Howard.* Their Flemish go-between  
And all-in-all. I came to thank her  
Majesty

For freeing my friend Bagenhall from  
the Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-grace,  
Flowers now but seldom.

*Petre.* Only now, perhaps,  
Because the Queen hath been three  
days in tears  
For Philip's going—like the wild  
hedge-rose  
Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,  
However you have proven it.  
*Howard.* I must see her.

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My lords, you cannot see  
her Majesty.  
*Howard.* Why, then the King! for I  
would have him bring it  
Home to the leisure wisdom of his  
Queen,  
Before he go, that since these statutes  
past,  
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in  
his heat,  
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own  
self—  
Beast!—but they play with fire as  
children do,  
And burn the house. I know that these  
are breeding  
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in  
men  
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy  
Father,  
The faith itself. Can I not see him?  
*Renard.* Not now.  
And in all this, my lord, her Majesty  
Is flint of flint; you may strike fire  
from her,  
Not hope to melt her. I will give your  
message.

[*Exeunt Petre and Howard.*

*Enter PHILIP (musing).*

*Philip.* She will not have Prince  
Philibert of Savoy,  
I talk'd with her in vain—says she will  
live  
And die true maid—a goodly creature  
too.

Would *she* had been the Queen! yet  
she must have him.

She troubles England; that she  
breathes in England

Is life and lungs to every rebel birth  
That passes out of embryo.

*Simon Renard!*—  
This Howard, whom they fear, what  
was he saying?

*Renard.* What your imperial father  
said, my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner  
burns,

And Bonner burns; and it would seem  
this people

Care more for our brief life in their  
wet land

Than yours in happier Spain. I told  
my lord

He should not vex her Highness; she  
would say

These are the means God works with,  
that His church

May flourish.

*Philip.* Ay, sir, but in statesman-  
ship

To strike too soon is oft to miss the  
blow.

Thou knowest I bade my chaplain,  
Castro, preach

Against these burnings.

*Renard.* And the Emperor  
Approved you, and, when last he  
wrote, declared

His comfort in your Grace that you  
were bland

And affable to men of all estates,  
In hope to charm them from their  
hate of Spain.

*Philip.* In hope to crush all heresy  
under Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here  
Than any sea could make me passing  
hence,

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea;  
So sick am I with biding for this child.  
Is it the fashion in this clime for  
women

To go twelve months in bearing of a  
child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,  
they led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd  
 their bells,  
 Shot off their lying cannon, and her  
 priests  
 Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair  
 prince to come,  
 Till, by Saint James, I find myself the  
 fool.  
 Why do you lift your eyebrow at me  
 thus?

*Renard.* I never saw your Highness  
 moved till now.

*Philip.* So weary am I of this wet  
 land of theirs,  
 And every soul of man that breathes  
 therein.

*Renard.* My liege, we must not drop  
 the mask before  
 The masquerade is over—

*Philip.* Have I dropt it?  
 I have but shown a loathing face to  
 you,  
 Who knew it from the first.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary (aside).* With Renard. Still  
 Parleying with Renard, all the day  
 with Renard,  
 And scarce a greeting all the day for  
 me—

And goes to-morrow. [*Exit Mary.*

*Philip (to Renard, who advances to  
 him).* Well, sir, is there more?

*Renard (who has perceived the  
 Queen).* May Simon Renard  
 speak a single word?

*Philip.* Ay.

*Renard.* And be forgiven for it?

*Philip.* Simon Renard  
 Knows me too well to speak a single  
 word

That could not be forgiven.

*Renard.* Well, my liege,  
 Your Grace hath a most chaste and  
 loving wife.

*Philip.* Why not? The Queen of  
 Philip should be chaste.

*Renard.* Ay, but, my lord, you  
 know what Virgil sings,  
 Woman is various and most mutable.

*Philip.* She play the harlot! never.

*Renard.* No, sire, no,

Not dream'd of by the rabidest gos-  
 peller.

There was a paper thrown into the  
 palace,  
 'The King hath wearied of his barren  
 bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then  
 rent it,

With all the rage of one who hates a  
 truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would  
 have you—

What should I say, I cannot pick my  
 words—

Be somewhat less—majestic to you—  
 Queen.

*Philip.* Am I to change my manners,  
 Simon Renard,  
 Because these islanders are brutal  
 beasts?

Or would you have me turn a son-  
 neteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes  
 of hers?

*Renard.* Brief-sighted tho' they be,  
 I have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling  
 royally

With some fair dame of court, sud-  
 denly fill

With such fierce fire—had it been fire  
 indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

*Philip.* Ay, and then?

*Renard.* Sire, might it not be policy  
 in some matter

Of small importance now and then to  
 cede

A point to her demand?

*Philip.* Well, I am going.

*Renard.* For should her love when  
 you are gone, my liege,

Witness these papers, there will not  
 be wanting

Those that will urge her injury—  
 should her love—

And I have known such women more  
 than one—

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy  
 Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse  
 Almost into one metal love and  
 hate,—

And she impress her wrongs upon her  
 Council,  
 And these again upon her Parlia-  
 ment—  
 We are not loved here, and would be  
 then perhaps  
 Not so well holpen in our wars with  
 France,  
 As else we might be—here she comes.

*Enter MARY.*

*Mary.* O Philip!  
 Nay, must you go indeed?

*Philip.* Madam, I must.

*Mary.* The parting of a husband  
 and a wife  
 Is like the cleaving of a heart; one  
 half

Will flutter here, one there.

*Philip.* You say true, Madam.

*Mary.* The Holy Virgin will not  
 have me yet  
 Lose the sweet hope that I may bear  
 a prince.

If such a prince were born, and you  
 not here!

*Philip.* I should be here if such a  
 prince were born.

*Mary.* But must you go?

*Philip.* Madam, you know my  
 father,

Retiring into cloistral solitude  
 To yield the remnant of his years to  
 heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all  
 the world

From off his neck to mine. We meet  
 at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for  
 long,

Your Majesty shall go to Dover with  
 me,

And wait my coming back

*Mary.* To Dover? no,  
 I am too feeble. I will go to Green-  
 wich,

So you will have me with you; and  
 there watch

All that is gracious in the breath of  
 heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor  
 land and pass

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers  
 for you.

*Philip.* And doubtless I shall profit  
 by your prayers.

*Mary.* Methinks that would you  
 tarry one day more—

The news was sudden—I could mould  
 myself

To bear your going better; will you do  
 it?

*Philip.* Madam, a day may sink or  
 save a realm.

*Mary.* A day may save a heart from  
 breaking too.

*Philip.* Well, Simon Renard, shall  
 we stop a day?

*Renard.* Your Grace's business will  
 not suffer, sire,  
 For one day more, so far as I can tell.

*Philip.* Then one day more to please  
 her Majesty.

*Mary.* The sunshine sweeps across  
 my life again.

O, if I knew you felt this parting,  
 Philip,

As I do!

*Philip.* By Saint James I do protest,  
 Upon the faith and honor of a Span-  
 iard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your  
 Majesty.

Simon, is supper ready?

*Renard.* Ay, my liege,

I saw the covers laying.

*Philip.* Let us have it.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT IV

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE  
 MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

*Mary.* What have you there?

*Pole.* So please your Majesty,  
 A long petition from the foreign exiles  
 To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop  
 Thrilby,

And my Lord Paget and Lord William  
 Howard,

Crave, in the same cause, hearing of  
 your Grace.

Hath he not written himself—infatuated—

To sue you for his life?

*Mary.* His life? O, no;  
Not sued for that—he knows it were  
in vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven  
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me  
not to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade  
the realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand  
Against my natural subject. King and  
Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after  
God,

Shall these accuse him to a foreign  
prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I  
cannot be

True to this realm of England and the  
Pope

Together, says the heretic.

*Pole.* And there errs;  
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.

A secular kingdom is but as the body  
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.  
The Holy Father in a secular king-  
dom

Is as the soul descending out of  
heaven

Into a body generate.

*Mary.* Write to him, then.

*Pole.* I will.

*Mary.* And sharply, Pole.

*Pole.* Here come the Cranmerites!

*Enter* THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD WIL-  
LIAM HOWARD.

*Howard.* Health to your Grace!  
Good morrow, my Lord Car-  
dinal;

We make our humble prayer unto  
your Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to for-  
eign parts,

Or into private life within the realm.  
In several bills and declarations,  
madam,

He hath recanted all his heresies.

*Paget.* Ay, ay; if Bonner have not  
forged the bills. [*Aside.*

*Mary.* Did not More die, and  
Fisher? he must burn.

*Howard.* He hath recanted, Madam  
*Mary.* The better for him

He burns in purgatory, not in hell.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, your Grace; but it  
was never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,  
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on  
earth.

*Mary.* It will be seen now, then.

*Thrilby.* O madam, madam!

I thus implore you, low upon my  
knees,

To reach the hand of mercy to my  
friend.

I have err'd with him; with him I  
have recanted.

What human reason is there why my  
friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than  
myself?

*Mary.* My lord of Ely, this. After a  
riot

We hang the leaders, let their follow-  
ing go.

Cranmer is head and father of these  
heresies,

New learning as they call it; yea, may  
God

Forget me at most need when I forget  
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother  
—No!—

*Howard.* Ay, ay, but mighty doc-  
tors doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd; and more  
than one

Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to  
wit,

Whom truly I deny not to have been  
Your faithful friend and trusty coun-  
cillor.

Hath not your Highness ever read his  
book,

His tractate upon True Obedience,  
Writ by himself and Bonner?

*Mary.* I will take

Such order with all bad, heretical  
books

That none shall hold them in his house  
and live,

Henceforward. No, my lord.

*Howard.* Then never read it.



The truth is here. Your father was a  
man

Of such colossal kinghood, yet so  
courteous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could  
meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he  
wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,  
Your father had a will that beat men  
down;

Your father had a brain that beat men  
down—

*Pole.* Not me, my lord.

*Howard.* No, for you were not  
here;

You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's  
throne;

And it would more become you, my  
Lord Legate,

To join a voice, so potent with her  
Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to  
stand

On naked self-assertion.

*Mary.* All your voices  
Are waves on flint. The heretic must  
burn.

*Howard.* Yet once he saved your  
Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your  
behalf,

At his own peril.

*Mary.* I know not if he did;  
And if he did I care not, my Lord  
Howard.

My life is not so happy, no such boon,  
That I should spare to take a heretic

priest's,

Who saved it or not saved. Why do  
you vex me?

*Paget.* Yet to save Cranmer were to  
serve the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,  
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his

honor,  
He can but creep down into some dark  
hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself  
and die;

But if you burn him,—well, your  
Highness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood—seed of  
the Church.'

*Mary.* Of the true Church; but his  
is none, nor will be.

You are too politic for me, my Lord  
Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a life,  
It were more merciful to burn him  
now.

*Thirlby.* O, yet relent! O, madam,  
if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,  
With all his learning—

*Mary.* Yet a heretic still.  
His learning makes his burning the  
more just.

*Thirlby.* So worshipt of all those  
that came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his  
house—

*Mary.* His children and his concu-  
bine, belike.

*Thirlby.* To do him any wrong was  
to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart  
was rich,

Of such fine mould that if you sow'd  
therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Char-  
ity.

*Pole.* 'After his kind it costs him  
nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the  
point.

These are but natural graces, my good  
bishop,

Which in the Catholic garden are as  
flowers,

But on the heretic dunghill only  
weeds.

*Howard.* Such weeds make dung-  
hills gracious.

*Mary.* Enough, my lords.  
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,

And Philip's will, and mine, that he  
should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

*Howard.* Farewell, madam,  
God grant you ampler mercy at your  
call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* Lords.]

*Pole,* After this,

Your Grace will hardly care to overlook  
This same petition of the foreign exiles  
For Cranmer's life.

*Mary.* Make out the writ to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON.

*Cranmer.* Last night, I dream'd the  
faggots were alight,  
And that myself was fasten'd to the  
stake,  
And found it all a visionary flame,  
Cool as the light in old decaying  
wood;  
And then King Harry look'd from out  
a cloud,  
And bade me have good courage; and  
I heard  
An angel cry, 'There is more joy in  
Heaven,'—  
And after that, the trumpet of the  
dead. [*Trumpets without.*]  
Why, there are trumpets blowing  
now; what is it?

*Enter FATHER COLE.*

*Cole.* Cranmer, I come to question  
you again.  
Have you remain'd in the true Cath-  
olic faith  
I left you in?

*Cranmer.* In the true Catholic faith,  
By Heaven's grace, I am more and  
more confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Father  
Cole?

*Cole.* Cranmer, it is decided by the  
Council

That you to-day should read your re-  
cantation

Before the people in Saint Mary's  
Church.

And there be many heretics in the  
town,

Who loathe you for your late return  
to Rome,

And might assail you passing through  
the street,  
And tear you piecemeal; so you have  
a guard.

*Cranmer.* Or seek to rescue me. I  
thank the Council.

*Cole.* Do you lack any money?

*Cranmer.* Nay, why should I?  
The prison fare is good enough for  
me.

*Cole.* Ay, but to give the poor.

*Cranmer.* Hand it me, then!  
I thank you.

*Cole.* For a little space, farewell;  
Until I see you in Saint Mary's  
Church. [*Exit Cole.*]

*Cranmer.* It is against all precedent  
to burn  
One who recants; they mean to par-  
don me.

To give the poor—they give the poor  
who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am  
fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass,  
A holy supper, not a sacrifice;  
No man can make his Maker—Villa  
Garcia.

*Enter VILLA GARCIA.*

*Villa Garcia.* Pray you write out  
this paper for me, Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* Have I not writ enough  
to satisfy you?

*Villa Garcia.* It is the last.

*Cranmer.* Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*]

*Villa Garcia.* Now sign.

*Cranmer.* I have sign'd enough, and  
I will sign no more.

*Villa Garcia.* It is no more than  
what you have sign'd already,  
The public form thereof.

*Cranmer.* It may be so;  
I sign it with my presence, if I read it

*Villa Garcia.* But this is idle of you.  
Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for  
you;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous  
life;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne; confess

Your faith before all hearers; and retract

That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now?

*Cranmer.* No, Villa Garcia, I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me?

*Villa Garcia.* Have you good hopes of mercy! So, farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Cranmer.* Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt, fixt beyond fall; however, in strange hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies, And thousand-times recurring argument

Of those two friars ever in my prison, When left alone in my despondency, Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily

Against the huge corruptions of the Church,

Monsters of mistradition, old enough To scare me into dreaming. 'What am I,

Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,

Or am I slandering my most inward friend,

To veil the fault of my most outward foe—

The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh?

O higher, holier, earlier, purer church, I have found thee and not leave thee any more.

It is but a communion, not a mass— No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!

(*Writes.*) So, so; this will I say—thus will I pray. [*Puts up the paper.*]

*Enter BONNER.*

*Bonner.* Good day, old friend; what, you look somewhat worn;

And yet it is a day to test your health

Even at the best. I scarce have spoken with you

Since when?—your degradation. At your trial

Never stood up a bolder man than you;

You would not cap the Pope's commissioner—

Your learning, and your stoutness, and your heresy,

Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,

We had to dis-archbishop and unlord, And make you simple Cranmer once again,

The common barber clipt your hair, and I

Scraped from your finger-prints the holy oil;

And worse than all, you had to kneel to me;

Which was not pleasant for you, Master Cranmer.

Now you, that would not recognize the Pope,

And you, that would not own the Real Presence,

Have found a real presence in the stake,

Which frights you back into the ancient faith;

And so you have recanted to the Pope. How are the mighty fallen, Master Cranmer!

*Cranmer.* You have been more fierce against the Pope than I;

But why fling back the stone he strikes me with? [*Aside.*]

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—

Power hath been given you to try faith by fire—

Pray you, remembering how yourself have changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,

To the poor flock—to women and to children—

That when I was archbishop held with me.

*Bonner.* Ay—gentle as they call you—live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?

I must obey the Queen and Council,  
man.  
Win thro' this day with honor to your-  
self,  
And I'll say something for you—so—  
good-bye. [Exit.  
*Cranmer.* This hard coarse man of  
old hath crouch'd to me  
Till I myself was half ashamed for  
him.

*Enter THIRLBY.*

Weep not, good Thirlby.  
*Thirlby.* O, my lord, my lord!  
My heart is no such block as Bonner's  
is:  
Who would not weep?  
*Cranmer.* Why do you so my-lord  
me,  
Who am disgraced?  
*Thirlby.* On earth; but saved in  
heaven  
By your recanting.  
*Cranmer.* Will they burn me,  
Thirlby?  
*Thirlby.* Alas, they will! these  
burnings will not help  
The purpose of the faith; but my poor  
voice  
Against them is a whisper to the roar  
Of a spring-tide.  
*Cranmer.* And they will surely burn  
me?  
*Thirlby.* Ay; and besides will have  
you in the church  
Repeat your recantation in the ears  
Of all men, to the saving of their  
souls,  
Before your execution. May God help  
you  
Thro' that hard hour!  
*Cranmer.* And may God bless you,  
Thirlby!  
Well, they shall hear my recantation  
there. [Exit *Thirlby.*  
Disgraced, dishonor'd!—not by them,  
indeed,  
By mine own self—by mine own  
hand!  
O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,  
't was you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan  
of Kent;  
But then she was a witch. You have  
written much,  
But you were never raised to plead for  
Frith,  
Whose dogmas I have reach'd. He was  
deliver'd  
To the secular arm to burn; and there  
was Lambert;  
Who can forsee himself? truly these  
burnings,  
As Thirlby says, are profitless to the  
burners,  
And help the other side. You shall  
burn too,  
Burn first when I am burnt.  
Fire—inch by inch to die in agony!  
Latimer  
Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper—  
burn'd  
Three-quarters of an hour. Will my  
faggots  
Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain—  
I will not muse upon it.  
My fancy takes the burner's part, and  
makes  
The fire seem even crueller than it is.  
No, I not doubt that God will give me  
strength,  
Albeit I have denied Him.

*Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.*

*Villa Garcia.* We are ready  
To take you to Saint Mary's, Master  
Cranmer.  
*Cranmer.* And I. Lead on; ye loose  
me from my bonds. [Exeunt.

SCENE III

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

COLE *in the Pulpit*, LORD WILLIAMS OF  
THAME *presiding*. LORD WILLIAM  
HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others.  
CRANMER *enters between SOTO and*  
*VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir*  
*strike up, 'Nunc Dimittis.'* CRAN-  
MER *is set upon a Scaffold before*  
*the people.*

*Cole.* Behold him—

[*A pause: people in the foreground.*]

*People.* O, unhappy sight!

*First Protestant.* See how the tears  
run down his fatherly face.

*Second Protestant.* James, didst  
thou ever see a carrion crow  
Stand watching a sick beast before he  
dies?

*First Protestant.* Him perch'd up  
there? I wish some thunder-  
bolt  
Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit  
and all.

*Cole.* Behold him, brethren; he  
hath cause to weep!—  
[So have we all. Weep with him if ye  
will,

Yet—

It is expedient for one man to die,  
Yea, for the people, lest the people  
die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath  
return'd

To the one Catholic Universal  
Church,

Repentant of his errors?

*Protestant Murmurs.* Ay, tell us  
that.

*Cole.* Those of the wrong side will  
despise the man,  
Deeming him one that thro' the fear  
of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his  
faith

In the sight of all with flaming mar-  
tyrdom.

*Cranmer.* Ay.

*Cole.* Ye hear him, and albeit there  
may seem

According to the canons pardon due  
To him that so repents, yet are there  
causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at  
this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath  
been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the  
realm;

And when the King's divorce was sued  
at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan.

As if he had been the Holy Father, sat  
And judged it. Did I call him heretic?  
A huge heresiarch? never was it known  
That any man so writing, preaching  
so,

So poisoning the Church, so long con-  
tinuing,

Hath found his pardon; therefore he  
must die,

For warning and example.

Other reasons  
There be for this man's ending, which  
our Queen

And Council at this present deem it  
not

Expedient to be known.

*Protestant Murmurs.* I warrant  
you.

*Cole.* Take therefore, all, example  
by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon  
him,

Much less shall others in like cause  
escape,

That all of you, the highest as the  
lowest,

May learn there is no power against  
the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high  
degree,

Chief prelate of our Church, arch-  
bishop, first

In Council, second person in the  
realm,

Friend for so long time of a mighty  
King;

And now ye see downfallen and de-  
based

From councillor to caitiff—fallen so  
low,

The leprous flutterings of the byway,  
scum

And offal of the city, would not change  
Estates with him; in brief, so miser-  
able

There is no hope of better left for  
him,

No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.  
This is the work of God. He is glori-  
fied

In thy conversion; lo! thou art re-  
claim'd;

He brings thee home; nor fear but  
that to-day  
Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's  
award,  
And be with Christ the Lord in Para-  
dise  
Remember how God made the fierce  
fire seem  
To those three children like a pleasant  
dew.  
Remember, too,  
The triumph of Saint Andrew on his  
cross,  
The patience of Saint Lawrence in the  
fire.  
Thus, if thou call on God and all the  
Saints  
God will beat down the fury of the  
flame,  
Or give thee saintly strength to un-  
dergo.  
And for thy soul shall masses here be  
sung  
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for  
him.  
*Cranmer.* Ay, one and all, dear  
brothers, pray for me;  
Pray with one breath, one heart, one  
soul for me.  
*Cole.* And now, lest any one among  
you doubt  
The man's conversion and remorse of  
heart,  
Yourselves shall hear him speak.  
Speak, Master Cranmer,  
Fulfil your promise made me, and  
proclaim  
Your true undoubted faith, that all  
may hear.  
*Cranmer.* And that I will. O God,  
Father of Heaven!  
O Son of God, Redeemer of the  
world!  
O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them  
both!  
Three persons and one God, have  
mercy on me,  
Most miserable sinner, wretched  
man!  
I have offended against heaven and  
earth  
More grievously than any tongue can  
tell.

Then whither should I flee for any  
help?  
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to  
heaven,  
And I can find no refuge upon earth.  
Shall I despair then?—God forbid! O  
God,  
For Thou art merciful, refusing none  
That come to Thee for succor, unto  
Thee,  
Therefore, I come; humble myself to  
Thee;  
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins  
be great,  
For Thy great mercy have mercy! O  
God the Son,  
Not for slight faults alone, when Thou  
becamest  
Man in the flesh, was the great mys-  
tery wrought;  
O God the Father, not for little sins  
Didst Thou yield up Thy Son to hu-  
man death!  
But for the greatest sin that can be  
sinn'd,  
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,  
Unpardonable,—sin against the light,  
The truth of God, which I had proven  
and known.  
Thy mercy must be greater than all  
sin.  
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of  
mine,  
But that Thy name by man be glori-  
fied,  
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died  
for man.  
Good people, every man at time of  
death  
Would fain set forth some saying that  
may live  
After his death and better human-  
kind;  
For death gives life's word a power to  
live,  
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, re-  
main  
After the vanish'd voice, and speak to  
men.  
God grant me grace to glorify my  
God!  
And first I say it is a grievous case,  
Many so dote upon this bubble world,

THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

Whose colors in a moment break and fly,  
 They care for nothing else. What saith Saint John?  
 'Love of this world is hatred against God.'  
 Again, I pray you all that, next to God,  
 You do unmurmuringly and willingly  
 Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread  
 Of these alone, but from the fear of Him  
 Whose ministers they be to govern you.  
 Thirdly, I pray you all to live together  
 Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian men  
 Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,  
 But mortal foes! But do you good to all  
 As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man more  
 Than you would harm your loving natural brother  
 Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,  
 Albeit he think himself at home with God,  
 Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.  
*Protestant Murmurs.* What sort of brothers then be those that lust  
 To burn each other?  
*Williams.* Peace among you, there!  
*Cranmer.* Fourthly, to those that own exceeding wealth,  
 Remember that sore saying spoken once  
 By Him that was the truth, 'How hard it is  
 For the rich man to enter into heaven!'  
 Let all rich men remember that hard word.  
 I have not time for more; if ever, now  
 Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now  
 The poor so many, and all food so dear.

Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard  
 Of all their wretchedness. Give to the poor,  
 Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.  
 And now, and forasmuch as I have come  
 To the last end of life, and thereupon  
 Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,  
 Either to live with Christ in heaven with joy,  
 Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;  
 And, seeing in a moment I shall find  
 [Pointing upwards.  
 Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,  
 [Pointing downwards.  
 I shall declare to you my very faith  
 Without all color.  
*Cole.* Hear him, my good brethren.  
*Cranmer.* I do believe in God, Father of all;  
 In every article of the Catholic faith,  
 And every syllable taught us by our Lord,  
 His prophets, and apostles, in the Testaments,  
 Both Old and New.  
*Cole.* Be plainer, Master Cranmer.  
*Cranmer.* And now I come to the great cause that weighs  
 Upon my conscience more than anything  
 Or said or done in all my life by me;  
 For there be writings I have set abroad  
 Against the truth I knew within my heart,  
 Written for fear of death, to save my life,  
 If that might be; the papers by my hand  
 Sign'd since my degradation—by this hand  
 [Holding out his right hand.  
 Written and sign'd—I here renounce them all;  
 And, since my hand offended, having written

Against my heart, my hand shall first  
be burnt,  
So I may come to the fire.  
[*Dead silence.*]

PROTESTANT MURMURS.

*First Protestant.* I knew it would  
be so.

*Second Protestant.* Our prayers are  
heard!

*Third Protestant.* God bless him!

CATHOLIC MURMURS.

Out upon him! out upon him!  
Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

*Williams (raising his voice).* You  
know that you recanted all you  
said  
Touching the sacrament in that same  
book

You wrote against my Lord of Win-  
chester;

Dissemble not; play the plain Chris-  
tian man.

*Cranmer.* Alas, my lord,  
I have been a man loved plainness all  
my life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come  
For utter truth and plainness; where-  
fore, I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.  
Moreover,

As for the Pope, I count him Anti-  
christ,

With all his devil's doctrines, and re-  
fuse,

Reject him, and abhor him. I have  
said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him down!  
Away with him!'*]

*Cole.* Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!  
Hale him away!

*Williams.* Harm him not, harm him  
not! have him to the fire!

[*Cranmer goes out between Two  
Friars, smiling; hands are  
reached to him from the  
crowd. Lord William Howard  
and Lord Paget are left alone  
in the church.*]

*Paget.* The nave and aisles all  
empty as a fool's jest!

No, here 's Lord William Howard.

What my lord,

You have not gone to see the burning?

*Howard.* Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a  
show,

And watch a good man burn. Never  
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Rid-  
ley.

Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would  
not,

For the pure honor of our common  
nature,

Hear what I might—another recanta-  
tion

Of Cranmer at the stake.

*Paget.* You'd not hear that.

He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd  
upright;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the  
general

He looks to and he leans on as his  
God,

Hath rated for some backwardness:  
and bidden him

Charge one against a thousand, and  
the man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes:  
and dies.

*Howard.* Yet that he might not  
after all those papers

Of recantation yield again, who  
knows?

*Paget.* Papers of recantation!  
Think you then

That Cranmer read all papers that he  
sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that  
he sign'd?

Nay, I trow not; and you shall see,  
my Lord,

That howsoever hero-like the man  
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or an-  
other

Will in some lying fashion misreport  
his ending to the glory of their  
church.

And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?  
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his  
best

Of life was over then.

*Howard.* His eighty years.



Look'd somewhat crooked on him in  
 his frieze;  
 But after they had stript him to his  
 shroud,  
 He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,  
 And gather'd with his hands the start-  
 ing flame,  
 And wash'd his hands and all his face  
 therein,  
 Until the powder suddenly blew him  
 dead.

Ridley was longer burning; but he  
 died

As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore  
 God,

I know them heretics, but right Eng-  
 lish ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with  
 Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-  
 sailors

Will teach her something.

*Paget.* Your mild legate Pole  
 Will tell you that the devil helpt them  
 thro' it.

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the dis-  
 tance.*]

Hark, how those Roman wolf-dogs  
 howl and bay him!

*Howard.* Might it not be the other  
 side rejoicing

In his brave end?

*Paget.* They are too crush'd, too  
 broken,

They can but weep in silence.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, *Paget*,  
 They have brought it in large meas-  
 ure on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the  
 blessed Host

In songs so lewd the beast might roar  
 his claim

To being in God's image, more than  
 they?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the  
 groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the par-  
 son's place,

The parson from his own spire swung  
 out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets,  
 and all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn  
 the fire

On their own heads; yet, *Paget*, I do  
 hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater  
 right,

Hath been the crueller.

*Paget.* Action and reaction,  
 The miserable see-saw of our child-  
 world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my  
 lord.

Heaven help that this reaction not re-  
 act

Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth  
 So that she come to rule us.

*Howard.* The world's mad.

*Paget.* My Lord, the world is like a  
 drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end,  
 but reels

Now to the right, then as far to the  
 left,

Push'd by the crowd beside—and under-  
 foot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a  
 doubt—

Which a young lust had clapt upon  
 the back,

Crying, 'Forward!'—set our old  
 church rocking, men

Have hardly known what to believe,  
 or whether

They should believe in anything; the  
 currents

So shift and change, they see not how  
 they are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a  
 beast;

Verily a lion if you will—the world  
 A most obedient beast and fool—my-  
 self

Half beast and fool as appertaining to  
 it;

Altho' your lordship hath as little of  
 each

Cleaving to your original Adam-clay  
 As may be consonant with mortality.

*Howard.* We talk and Cranmer suf-  
 fers.

The kindest man I ever knew; see,  
 see,

I speak of him in the past. Unhappy  
land!  
Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in  
herself,  
And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock  
of Spain—  
Her life, since Philip left her, and she  
lost  
Her fierce desire of bearing him a  
child,  
Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's  
day,  
Gone narrowing down and darkening  
to a close.  
There will be more conspiracies, I  
fear.

*Paget.* Ay, ay, beware of France.

*Howard.* O Paget, Paget!  
I have seen heretics of the poorer sort,  
Expectant of the rack from day to  
day,  
To whom the fire were welcome, lying  
chain'd  
In breathless dungeons over steaming  
sewers,  
Fed with rank bread that crawl'd  
upon the tongue,  
And putrid water, every drop a worm,  
Until they died of rotted limbs; and  
then  
Cast on the dunghill naked, and be-  
come  
Hideously alive again from head to  
heel,  
Made even the carrion-nosing mon-  
grel vomit  
With hate and horror.

*Paget.* Nay, you sicken *me*  
To hear you.

*Howard.* Fancy-sick; these things  
are done,  
Done right against the promise of this  
Queen  
Twice given.

*Paget.* No faith with heretics, my  
lord!  
Hist! there be two old gossips—gos-  
sellers,  
I take it; stand behind the pillar here;  
I warrant you they talk about the  
burning.

*Enter* TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, and  
*after her* TIB.

*Joan.* Why, it be Tib!

*Tib.* I cum behind tha, gall, and  
could n't make tha hear. Eh, the wind  
and the wet! What a day, what a day!  
nigh upo' judgment daay loike.  
Pwoaps be pretty things, Joan, but  
they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer o'  
that daay.

*Joan.* I must set down myself, Tib;  
it be a var waay vor my owld legs up  
vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that  
bad howiver be I to win to the  
burnin'?

*Tib.* I should saay 't wur ower by  
now. I'd ha' been here avore, but  
Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and  
Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's butter 's as good  
'z hern.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me,  
Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

*Tib.* Ay, Joan, and my owld man  
wur up and away betimes wi' dree  
hard eggs for a good plect at the  
burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge  
'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white pea-  
sen i' the outfield—and barrin' the  
wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the  
wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her,  
but we fetched her round at last.  
Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's  
the best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Thou's thy way wi' man and  
beast, Tib. I wonder at tha, it beats  
me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and  
vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I  
heerd summat as summun towld sum-  
mun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end;  
there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine  
wi' un, and a wur so owld a could n't  
bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide  
howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says  
my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I  
hears ez Latimer and Ridley be

a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells um ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we 'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord therevore!

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

*Joan.* Thank the Lord therevore!

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor 't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

*Howard.* Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,  
Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?  
For how should reverend prelate or throned prince  
Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

*Paget.* Pooh, pooh, my lord! poor garrulous country-wives.  
Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;  
You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

*Howard.* I think that in some sort we may. But see,

*Enter PETERS.*

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,

Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise; no, nor if the Pope

Charged him to do it—he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

*Peters.* Twice or thrice

The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

*Howard.* Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave

All else untold.

*Peters.* My lord, he died most bravely.

*Howard.* Then tell me all.

*Paget.* Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

*Peters.* You saw him how he past among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars

Still plied him with entreaty and reproach;

But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm

Steers, ever looking to the happy haven

Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands

Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,

He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags  
They had mock'd his misery with,

and all in white,

His long white beard, which he had never shaven

Since Henry's death, down-swooping to the chain

Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood

More like an ancient father of the  
Church  
Than heretic of these times; and still  
the friars  
Plied him, but Cranmer only shook  
his head,  
Or answer'd them in smiling nega-  
tives;  
Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden  
cry:—  
'Make short! make short!' and so  
they lit the wood.  
Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to  
heaven,  
And thrust his right into the bitter  
flame;  
And crying, in his deep voice, more  
than once,  
'This hath offended—this unworthy  
hand!'  
So held it till it all was burn'd, before  
The flame had reach'd his body; I  
stood near—  
Mark'd him—he never uttered moan  
of pain.  
He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a  
statue,  
Unmoving in the greatness of the  
flame,  
Gave up the ghost; and so past mar-  
tyr-like—  
Martyr I may not call him—past—  
but whither?  
*Paget.* To purgatory, man, to pur-  
gatory.  
*Peters.* Nay, but, my lord, he denied  
purgatory.  
*Paget.* Why then to heaven, and  
God ha' mercy on him!  
*Howard.* Paget, despite his fearful  
heresies,  
I loved the man, and needs must moan  
for him;  
O Cranmer!  
*Paget.* But your moan is useless  
now.  
Come out, my lord, it is a world of  
fools. [Exeunt.]

ACT V

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE  
PALACE

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

*Heath.* Madam,  
I do assure you that it must be look'd  
to.  
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes  
Are scarce two hundred men, and the  
French fleet  
Rule in the narrow seas. It must be  
look'd to,  
If war should fall between yourself  
and France;  
Or you will lose your Calais.  
*Mary.* It shall be look'd to;  
I wish you a good morning, good Sir  
Nicholas.  
Here is the King. [Exit Heath.]

*Enter PHILIP.*

*Philip.* Sir Nicholas tells you true,  
And you must look to Calais when I  
go.  
*Mary.* Go? must you go, indeed—  
again—so soon?  
Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the  
swallow,  
That might live always in the sun's  
warm heart,  
Stays longer here in our poor North  
than you—  
Knows where he nested—ever comes  
again.  
*Philip.* And, Madam, so shall I.  
*Mary.* O, will you? will you?  
I am faint with fear that you will  
come no more.  
*Philip.* Ay, ay; but many voices call  
me hence.  
*Mary.* Voices—I hear unhappy ru-  
mors—nay,  
I say not, I believe. What voices call  
you  
Dearer than mine that should be dear-  
est to you?  
Alas, my lord! what voices and how  
many?

*Philip.* The voices of Castile and  
Aragon,  
Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—  
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the  
Netherlands,  
The voices of Peru and Mexico,  
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,  
And all the fair spice-islands of the  
East.

*Mary* (*admiringly*). You are the  
mightiest monarch upon earth,  
I but a little Queen; and so, indeed,  
Need you the more.

*Philip.* A little Queen! but when  
I come to wed your majesty, Lord  
Howard,  
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd  
the seas  
Upon us, made us lower our kingly  
flag  
To yours of England.

*Mary.* Howard is all English!  
There is no king, not were he ten  
times king,  
Ten times our husband, but must  
lower his flag  
To that of England in the seas of  
England.

*Philip.* Is that your answer?

*Mary.* Being Queen of England,  
I have none other.

*Philip.* So.

*Mary.* But wherefore not  
Helm the huge vessel of your State,  
my liege,  
Here by the side of her who loves you  
most?

*Philip.* No, madam, no! a candle in  
the sun  
Is all but smoke—a star beside the  
moon  
Is all but lost; your people will not  
crown me—  
Your people are as cheerless as your  
clime.  
Hate me and mine; witness the  
brawls, the gibbets.  
Here swings a Spaniard—there an  
Englishman;  
The peoples are unlike as their com-  
plexion;  
Yet will I be your swallow and re-  
turn—

But now I cannot bide.

*Mary.* Not to help *me*?  
They hate *me* also for my love to  
you,  
My Philip; and these judgments on  
the land—  
Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,  
plague—

*Philip.* The blood and sweat of here-  
tics at the stake  
Is God's best dew upon the barren  
field.

Burn more!

*Mary.* I will, I will; and you will  
stay?

*Philip.* Have I not said? Madam,  
I came to sue  
Your Council and yourself to declare  
war.

*Mary.* Sir, there are many English  
in your ranks  
To help your battle.

*Philip.* So far, good. I say  
I came to sue your Council and your-  
self

To declare war against the King of  
France.

*Mary.* Not to see me?

*Philip.* Ay, madam, to see you.  
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!

[*Aside.*  
But soon or late you must have war  
with France;  
King Henry warms your traitors at  
his hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford  
there.

Courtenay, belike—

*Mary.* A fool and featherhead!

*Philip.* Ay, but they use his name.  
In brief, this Henry  
Stirs up your land against you to the  
intent

That you may lose your English heri-  
tage.

And then, your Scottish namesake  
marrying

The Dauphin, he would weld France,  
England, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and  
me.

*Mary.* And yet the Pope is now col-  
leagued with France;

You make your wars upon him down  
in Italy—

Philip, can that be well?

*Philip.* Content you, madam;  
You must abide my judgment, and  
my father's,  
Who deems it a most just and holy  
war.

The Pope would cast the Spaniard out  
of Naples;

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,  
Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns be-  
yond his mitre—

Beyond his province. Now,  
Duke Alva will but touch him on the  
horns,

And he withdraws; and on his holy  
head—

For Alva is true son of the true  
Church—

No hair is harm'd. Will you not help  
me here?

*Mary.* Alas! the Council will not  
hear of war.

They say your wars are not the wars  
of England.

They will not lay more taxes on a  
land

So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you  
know

The crown is poor. We have given the  
church-lands back.

The nobles would not; nay, they clapt  
their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and  
therefore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to be  
done?

Sir, I will move them in your cause  
again,

And we will raise us loans and sub-  
sidies

Among the merchants; and Sir  
Thomas Gresham

Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the  
Jews.

*Philip.* Madam, my thanks.

*Mary.* And you will stay your go-  
ing?

*Philip.* And further to discourage  
and lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love  
her not,

You must proclaim Elizabeth your  
heir.

She stands between you and the Queen  
of Scots.

*Mary.* The Queen of Scots at least  
is Catholic.

*Philip.* Ay, madam, Catholic; but I  
will not have

The King of France the King of Eng-  
land too.

*Mary.* But she's a heretic, and, when  
I am gone,

Brings the new learning back.

*Philip.* It must be done.

You must proclaim Elizabeth your  
heir.

*Mary.* Then it is done; but you will  
stay your going

Somewhat beyond your settled pur-  
pose?

*Philip.* No!

*Mary.* What, not one day?

*Philip.* You beat upon the rock,

*Mary.* And I am broken there.

*Philip.* Is this a place

To wail in, madam? what! a public  
hall?

Go in, I pray you.

*Mary.* Do not seem so changed.

Say go; but only say it lovingly.

*Philip.* You do mistake. I am not  
one to change.

I never loved you more.

*Mary.* Sire, I obey you.

Come quickly.

*Philip.* Ay. [*Exit Mary.*]

*Enter* COUNT DE FERIA

*Feria* (*aside*). The Queen in tears!

*Philip.* Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer  
to mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours  
hath grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a  
child?

*Feria.* Sire, if your Grace hath  
mark'd it, so have I.

*Philip.* Hast thou not likewise  
mark'd Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a queen, indeed?

*Feria.* Allow me the same answer as before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so have I.

*Philip.* Good, now; methinks my Queen is like enough

To leave me by and by.

*Feria.* To leave you, sire?

*Philip.* I mean not like to live. Elizabeth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know, We meant to wed her; but I am not sure

She will not serve me better—so my Queen

Would leave me—as—my wife.

*Feria.* Sire, even so.

*Philip.* She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy.

*Feria.* No, sire.

*Philip.* I have to pray you, some odd time,

To sound the Princess carelessly on this;

Not as from me, but as your phantasy;

And tell me how she takes it.

*Feria.* Sire, I will.

*Philip.* I am not certain but that Philibert

Shall be the man; and I shall urge his suit

Upon the Queen, because I am not certain.

You understand, *Feria.*

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* And if you be not secret in this matter,

You understand me there, too?

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* You must be sweet and supple, like a Frenchman.

She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb.

[*Exit Feria.*]

*Enter RENARD.*

*Renard.* My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.

*Philip.* Well?

*Renard.* There *will* be war with France, at last, my liege;

Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,

Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,

Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York;

Proclaims himself protector, and affirms

The Queen has forfeited her right to reign

By marriage with an alien—other things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt This buzz will soon be silenced; but

the Council—

I have talk'd with some already—are for war.

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should stay

Yet for a while, to shape and guide the event.

*Philip.* Good! Renard, I will stay then.

*Renard.* Also, sire,

Might I not say—to please your wife, the Queen?

*Philip.* Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

### A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.*

LADY CLARENCE. ALICE *in the background.*

*Mary.* Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so long

I have broken off the head.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Grace hath been

More merciful to many a rebel head

That should have fallen, and may rise again.

*Mary.* There were not many hang'd  
for Wyatt's rising.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, not two hundred.

*Mary.* I could weep for them  
And her, and mine own self and all the  
world.

*Lady Clarence.* For her? for whom,  
your Grace?

*Enter USHER.*

*Usher.* The Cardinal.

*Enter CARDINAL POLE (MARY rises).*

*Mary.* Reginald Pole, what news  
hath plagued thy heart?

What makes thy favor like the blood-  
less head

Fallen on the block, and held up by  
the hair?

Philip?—

*Pole.* No, Philip is as warm in life  
As ever.

*Mary.* Ay, and then as cold as ever.  
Is Calais taken?

*Pole.* Cousin, there hath chanced  
A sharper harm to England and to  
Rome

Than Calais taken. Julius the Third  
Was ever just, and mild, and father-  
like;

But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the  
Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship  
Which Julius gave me, and the legate-  
ship

Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but  
worse—

And yet I must obey the Holy Father,  
And so must you, good cousin;—  
worse than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—  
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,  
Before his Inquisition.

*Mary.* I knew it, cousin.  
But held from you all papers sent by  
Rome,

That you might rest among us, till the  
Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to  
Rome,

Reversed his doom, and that you  
might not seem

To disobey his Holiness.

*Pole.* He hates Philip;  
He is all Italian, and he hates the  
Spaniard;

He cannot dream that I advised the  
war;

He strikes thro' me at Philip and your-  
self.

Nay, but I know it of old, he hates  
me too;

So brands me in the stare of Christen-  
dom

A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before  
my time,

The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be  
out;

When I should guide the Church in  
peace at home,

After my twenty years of banishment,  
And all my lifelong labor to uphold

The primacy—a heretic! Long ago,  
When I was ruler in the patrimony,

I was too lenient to the Lutheran,  
And I and learned friends among our-  
selves

Would freely canvass certain Lu-  
theranisms.

What then, he knew I was no Lu-  
theran.

A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the  
head,

When it was thought I might be  
chosen Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full consis-  
tory,

When I was made archbishop, he ap-  
proved me.

And how should he have sent me legate  
hither,

Deeming me heretic? and what heresy  
since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,  
And hates the Spaniard—fiery-chol-  
eric,

A drinker of black, strong, volcanic  
wines,

That ever made him fierier. I, a here-  
tic?

Your Highness knows that in pursu-  
ing heresy



# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

I have gone beyond your late Lord  
Chancellor,—

He cried 'Enough! enough!' before  
his death,—

Gone beyond him and mine own nat-  
ural man—

It was God's cause—so far they call  
me now

The scourge and butcher of their Eng-  
lish church.

*Mary.* Have courage, your reward  
is heaven itself.

*Pole.* They groan amen; they swarm  
into the fire

Like flies—for what? no dogma. They  
know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

*Mary.* You have done your best.

*Pole.* Have done my best, and as a  
faithful son,

That all day long hath wrought his  
father's work,

When back he comes at evening hath  
the door

Shut on him by the father whom he  
loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,  
And the poor son turn'd out into the  
street

To sleep, to die—I shall die of it,  
cousin.

*Mary.* I pray you be not so discon-  
solate;

I still will do mine utmost with the  
Pope.

Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of  
your life

Since mine began, and it was thought  
we two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto  
each other

As man and wife?

*Pole.* Ah, cousin, I remember  
How I would dandle you upon my  
knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing  
once

With your huge father; he look'd the  
Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you did  
it,

And innocently. No—we were not  
made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness  
here;

But now we are made one flesh in mis-  
ery;

Our bridesmaids are not lovely—Dis-  
appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,  
Labor-in-vain.

*Mary.* Surely, not all in vain.  
Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at  
heart myself.

*Pole.* Our altar is a mound of dead  
men's clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us  
beyond;

And there is one Death stands behind  
the groom,

And there is one Death stands behind  
the bride—

*Mary.* Have you been looking at the  
'Dance of Death'?

*Pole.* No; but these libellous papers  
which I found

Strewn in your palace. Look you here  
—the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,  
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn  
thyself,

Or I will burn thee;' and this other;  
see!—

'We pray continually for the death  
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal  
Pole.'

This last—I dare not read it her.

[*Aside.*  
Away!

*Mary.* Why do you bring me these?

I thought you knew me better. I never  
read,

I tear them; they come back upon my  
dreams.

The hands that write them should be  
burnt clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that ut-  
ter them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to  
death, or lie

Famishing in black cells, while fam-  
ish'd rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring  
me these?

Do you mean to drive me mad?

*Pole.* I had forgotten  
How these poor libels trouble you.

Your pardon,  
Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble  
world,  
Whose colors in a moment break and  
fly!'

Why, who said that? I know not—  
true enough!

*[Puts up the papers, all but the  
last, which falls. Exit Pole.]*

*Alice.* If Cranmer's spirit were a  
mocking one,  
And heard these two, there might be  
sport for him. *[Aside.]*

*Mary.* Clarence, they hate me; even  
while I speak  
There lurks a silent dagger, listening  
In some dark closet, some long gallery,  
drawn,  
And panting for my blood as I go by.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, madam, there  
be loyal papers too,  
And I have often found them.

*Mary.* Find me one!  
*Lady Clarence.* Ay, madam; but Sir  
Nicholas Heath, the Chan-  
cellor,

Would see your Highness.

*Mary.* Wherefore should I see him?  
*Lady Clarence.* Well, Madam, he  
may bring you news from  
Philip.

*Mary.* So, Clarence.  
*Lady Clarence.* Let me first put up  
your hair;  
It tumbles all abroad.

*Mary.* And the gray dawn  
Of an old age that never will be mine  
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what  
matters?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.  
*Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.*

*Heath.* I bring your Majesty such  
grievous news  
I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is  
taken.

*Mary.* What traitor spoke? Here,  
let my cousin Pole  
Seize him and burn him for a Lu-  
theran.

*Heath.* Her highness is unwell. I will  
retire.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your Chan-  
cellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

*Mary.* Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd  
—Nicholas Heath?  
Methought some traitor smote me on  
the head.

What said you, my good lord, that our  
brave English  
Had sallied out from Calais and driven  
back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?  
*Heath.* Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over  
which  
Our flag hath floated for two hundred  
years

Is France again.

*Mary.* So; but it is not lost—  
Not yet. Send out; let England as of  
old  
Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep  
into

The prey they are rending from her—  
ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out,  
and make

Musters in all the counties; gather all  
From sixteen years to sixty; collect  
the fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and  
gun  
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not  
taken yet?

*Heath.* Guisnes is not taken yet.

*Mary.* There yet is hope.

*Heath.* Ah, madam, but your peo-  
ple are so cold;  
I do much fear that England will not  
care.

Methinks there is no manhood left  
among us.

*Mary.* Send out; I am too weak to  
stir abroad.

Tell my mind to the Council—to the  
Parliament;

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold  
thyself

To babble of their coldness. O, would  
I were

My father for an hour! Away now—  
quick! *[Exit Heath.]*

I hoped I had served God with all my might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy  
Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have re-  
built

Your shrines, set up your broken im-  
ages;

Be comfortable to me. Suffer not  
That my brief reign in England be de-  
famed

Thro' all her angry chronicles here-  
after

By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.  
Philip,

We have made war upon the Holy  
Father

All for your sake. What good could  
come of that?

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, not  
against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war  
with France,

Your troops were never down in  
Italy.

*Mary.* I am a byword. Heretic and  
rebel

Point at me and make merry. Philip  
gone!

And Calais gone! Time that I were  
gone too!

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, if the fetid  
gutter had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should  
I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I be-  
lieve,

Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,  
Your England is as loyal as myself.

*Mary (seeing the paper dropt by  
Pole).* There! there! another  
paper! Said you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I  
try

If this be one of such?

*Lady Clarence.* Let it be, let it be.  
God pardon me! I have never yet  
found one. [*Aside.*]

*Mary (reads).* 'Your people hate  
you as your husband hates  
you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?  
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother  
of God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so  
well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous  
world.

My people hate me and desire my  
death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, madam, no.

*Mary.* My husband hates me, and  
desires my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, madam; these  
are libels.

*Mary.* I hate myself, and I desire  
my death.

*Lady Clarence.* Long live your Maj-  
esty!

Shall Alice sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my  
child,

Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They  
say the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.  
*Mary.* Too young!

And never knew a Philip.

*Re-enter ALICE.*

Give *me* the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in be-  
trothing!

Beauty passes like a breath, and love is  
lost in loathing.

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but  
say the world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when  
they first awaken;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be  
overtaken.

Low, my lute! O, low, my lute! we fade  
and are forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

*Alice.* Your Grace hath a low voice.

*Mary.* How dare you say it?

Even for that he hates me. A low voice  
Lost in a wilderness where none can  
hear!

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless  
sea!

A low voice from the dust and from the grave!

(*Sitting on the ground*). There, am I low enough now?

*Alice*. Good Lord! how grim and ghastly looks her Grace,  
With both her knees drawn upward to her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a corpse.

*Enter* LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.

*Lady Magdalen*. Madam, the Count de Feria waits without,  
In hopes to see your Highness.

*Lady Clarence* (*pointing to Mary*). Wait he must—  
Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears,

And may not speak for hours.  
*Lady Magdalen*. Unhappiest  
Of queens and wives and women!

*Alice* (*in the foreground with Lady Magdalen*). And all along  
Of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen*. Not so loud! Our Clarence there  
Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,  
It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,

Who stands the nearest to her.

*Alice*. Ay, this Philip;  
I used to love the Queen with all my heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less

For such a dotage upon such a man.  
I would I were as tall and strong as you.

*Lady Magdalen*. I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.

*Alice*. You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen*. Why?

I never heard him utter worse of you Than that you were low-statured.

*Alice*. Does he think Low stature is low nature, or all women's

Low as his own?

*Lady Magdalen*. There you strike in the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy.

It is the low man thinks the woman low;

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

*Alice*. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.

How dared he?

*Lady Magdalen*. Stupid soldiers oft are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not* Beyond his aim, or was not.

*Alice*. Who? Not you? Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

*Lady Magdalen*. I never breathed it to a bird in the eaves,  
Would not for all the stars and maiden moon

Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;  
And I was robing;—this poor throat of mine

Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—

When he we speak of drove the window back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;

But by God's providence a good stout staff

Lay near me, and you know me strong of arm.

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's For a day or two, tho', give the devil his due,

I never found he bore me any spite.

*Alice*. I would she could have wedded that poor youth,  
My Lord of Devon,—light enough, God knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising,—and  
the boy

Not out of him—but neither cold,  
coarse, cruel,

And more than all—no Spaniard.

*Lady Clarence.* Not so loud.  
Lord Devor, girls! what are you whispering here?

*Alice.* Probing an old state-secret—  
how it chanced

That this young earl was sent on foreign travel,

Not lost his head.

*Lady Clarence.* There was no proof  
against him.

*Alice.* Nay, madam; did not Gardiner intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof

Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?

*Lady Clarence.* Some say that Gardiner, out of love for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

*Alice.* Ay, and with him who died Alone in Italy.

*Lady Clarence.* Much changed, I hear,

Had put off levity and put graveness on.

The foreign courts report him in his manner

Noble as his young person and old shield.

It might be so—but all is over now;

He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,

And died in Padua.

*Mary (looking up suddenly).* Died in the true faith?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, madam, happily.

*Mary.* Happier he than I.

*Lady Magdalen.* It seems her Highness hath awaken'd. Think you That I might dare to tell her that the count—

*Mary.* I will see no man hence for evermore.

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.

*Lady Magdalen.* It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.

*Mary.* What count?

*Lady Magdalen.* The Count de Feria, from his Majesty

King Philip.

*Mary.* Philip! quick! loop up my hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make it thronelike.

Arrange my dress—the gorgeous Indian shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy days!—

That covers all. So—am I somewhat queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, so your Grace would bide a moment yet.

*Mary.* No, no, he brings a letter. I may die

Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

*Enter* COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*).

*Feria.* I trust your Grace is well. (*Aside.*) How her hand burns!

*Mary.* I am not well, but it will better me,

Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.

*Feria.* Madam, I bring no letter.

*Mary.* How! no letter?

*Feria.* His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—

*Mary.* That his own wife is no affair of his.

*Feria.* Nay, madam, nay! he sends his veriest love,

And says he will come quickly.

*Mary.* Doth he, indeed?

You, sir, do *you* remember what *you* said

When last you came to England?

*Feria.* Madam, I brought My King's congratulations; it was hoped

Your Highness was once more in  
happy state

To give him an heir male.

*Mary.* Sir, you said more;  
You said he would come quickly. I  
had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and  
night;

On all the road from Harwich, night  
and day;

But the child came not, and the hus-  
band came not;

And yet he will come quickly.—Thou  
hast learnt

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no  
need

For Philip so to shame himself again.  
Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no  
more.

Tell him at last I know his love is  
dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth  
death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,  
And not to me!

*Feria.* Mere compliments and  
wishes.

But shall I take some message from  
your Grace?

*Mary.* Tell her to come and close  
my dying eyes,

And wear my crown, and dance upon  
my grave.

*Feria.* Then I may say your Grace  
will see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air  
and sunshine.

I would we had you, madam, in our  
warm Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

*Mary.* Have him away!  
I sicken of his readiness.

*Lady Clarence.* My Lord Count,  
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

*Feria* (*kneels and kisses her hand*).  
I wish her Highness better.

(*Aside.*) How her hand burns!

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III

A HOUSE NEAR LONDON

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSE-  
HOLD ATTENDANTS.

*Elizabeth.* There's half an angel  
wrong'd in your account;  
Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it  
Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er  
again.

*Steward.* I were whole devil if I  
wrong'd you, madam.

[*Exit Steward.*

*Attendant.* The Count de Feria,  
from the King of Spain.

*Elizabeth.* Ah!—let him enter. Nay,  
you need not go:

[*To her Ladies.*

Remain within the chamber, but  
apart.

We'll have no private conference.  
Welcome to England!

*Enter FERIA.*

*Feria.* Fair island star!

*Elizabeth.* I shine! What else, Sir  
Count?

*Feria.* As far as France, and into  
Philip's heart.

My King would know if you be fairly  
served,

And lodged, and treated.

*Elizabeth.* You see the lodging, sir.  
I am well-served, and am in every-  
thing

Most loyal and most grateful to the  
Queen.

*Feria.* You should be grateful to my  
master, too.

He spoke of this; and unto him you  
owe

That Mary hath acknowledged you  
her heir.

*Elizabeth.* No, not to her nor him;  
but to the people,

Who know my right, and love me, as  
I love

The people! whom God aid!

*Feria.* You will be Queen,  
And, were I Philip—

*Elizabeth.* Wherefore pause you—  
what?

*Feria.* Nay, but I speak from mine  
own self, not him.

Your royal sister cannot last; your  
hand

Will be much coveted! What a deli-  
cate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such—  
and there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gos-  
samer gold—

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty  
dawn—

That hovers round your shoulder—

*Elizabeth.* Is it so fine?  
Troth, some have said so.

*Feria.* —would be deemed a mir-  
acle.

*Elizabeth.* Your Philip hath gold  
hair and golden beard;  
There must be ladies many with hair  
like mine.

*Feria.* Some few of Gothic blood  
have golden hair,  
But none like yours.

*Elizabeth.* I am happy you approve  
it.

*Feria.* But as to Philip and your  
Grace,—consider,—

If such a one as you should match  
with Spain,

What hinders but that Spain and Eng-  
land join'd

Should make the mightiest empire  
earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas,  
and England

Mistress of the Indies.

*Elizabeth.* It may chance that  
England

Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet,  
Without the help of Spain.

*Feria.* Impossible;

Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark even for a mad-  
man's dream.

*Elizabeth.* Perhaps; but we have  
seamen. Count de Feria.

I take it that the King hath spoken to  
you;

But is Don Carlos such a goodly  
match?

*Feria.* Don Carlos, Madam, is but  
twelve years old.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, tell the King that I  
will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would  
keep him so;

But—he would have me Catholic of  
Rome,

And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till  
now

My sister's marriage, and my father's  
marriages,

Make me full fain to live and die a  
maid.

But I am much beholden to your King.  
Have you aught else to tell me?

*Feria.* Nothing, Madam,  
Save that methought I gather'd from  
the Queen

That she would see your Grace before  
she—died.

*Elizabeth.* God's death! and where-  
fore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here,  
And hers are number'd. Horses there,  
without!

I am much beholden to the King, your  
master.

Why did you keep me prating?  
Horses, there!

[*Exit Elizabeth, etc.*]

*Feria.* So from a clear sky falls the  
thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry  
Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's  
death,'

And break your paces in, and make  
you tame.

God's death, forsooth—you do not  
know King Philip! [*Exit.*]

#### SCENE IV

#### LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE

*A light burning within. Voices of the  
night passing.*

*First.* Is not yon light in the Queen's  
chamber?

*Second.* Ay,

They say she's dying.

*First.* So is Cardinal Pole.  
May the great angels join their wings,  
and make

Down for their heads to heaven!

*Second.* Amen. Come on.  
[*Exeunt.*]

TWO OTHERS.

*First.* There's the Queen's light. I  
hear she cannot live.

*Second.* God curse her and her le-  
gate! Gardiner burns  
Already; but to pay them full in kind,  
The hottest hold in all the devil's den  
Were but a sort of winter. Sir, in  
Guernsey,

I watch'd a woman burn; and in her  
agony

The mother came upon her—a child  
was born—

And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the  
fire,

That, being but baptized in fire, the  
babe

Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good  
neighbor,

There should be something fierier  
than fire

To yield them their deserts.

*First.* Amen to all  
Your wish, and further!

*A Third Voice.* Deserts! Amen to  
what? Whose deserts? Yours? You  
have a gold ring on your finger, and  
soft raiment about your body; and is  
not the woman up yonder sleeping  
after all she has done, in peace and  
quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed  
room, with light, fire, physic, tend-  
ance; and I have seen the true men  
of Christ lying famine-dead by scores,  
and under no ceiling but the cloud that  
wept on them, not for them.

*First.* Friend, tho' so late, it is not  
safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you?

*Third.* What am I? One who cries  
continually with sweat and tears to  
the Lord God that it would please  
Him out of His infinite love to break  
down all kingship and queenship.

priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and  
abolish all bonds of human allegiance,  
all the magistracy, all the nobles, and  
all the wealthy; and to send us again,  
according to His promise, the one  
King, the Christ, and all things in  
common, as in the day of the first  
church, when Christ Jesus was King.

*First.* If ever I heard a madman,—  
let's away!

Why, you long-winded—Sir, you go  
beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.  
Good night! Go home! Besides, you  
curse so loud,

The watch will hear you. Get you  
home at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

*A Gallery on one side. The moonlight  
streaming through a range of win-  
dows on the wall opposite. MARY,  
LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN  
DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the  
Gallery. A writing-table in front.  
QUEEN comes to the table and  
writes and goes again, pacing the  
Gallery.*

*Lady Clarence.* Mine eyes are dim:  
what hath she written? read.

*Alice.* 'I am dying, Philip; come to  
me.'

*Lady Magdalen.* There—up and  
down, poor lady, up and down.

*Alice.* And how her shadow crosses  
one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd  
on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow! She  
turns again.

[*Queen sits and writes, and goes  
again.*]

*Lady Clarence.* What hath she  
written now?

*Alice.* Nothing; but 'come, come,  
come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This can-  
not last. [*Queen returns.*]



*Mary.* I whistle to the bird has  
broken cage,

And all in vain. [*Sitting down.*  
*Calais gone—Guisnes gone, too—and*  
*Philip gone!*

*Lady Clarence.* Dear madam, Philip  
is but at the wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes  
again;

And he is with you in a measure still.  
I never look'd upon so fair a likeness  
As your great King in armor there,  
his hand

Upon his helmet.

[*Pointing to the portrait of*  
*Philip on the wall.*

*Mary.* Doth he not look noble?  
I had heard of him in battle over seas,  
And I would have my warrior all in  
arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand  
helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious  
moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he  
smiles

As if he loved me yet!

*Lady Clarence.* And so he does.

*Mary.* He never loved me—nay, he  
could not love me.

It was his father's policy against  
France.

I am eleven years older than he,  
Poor boy! [*Weeps.*

*Alice.* That was a lusty boy of  
twenty-seven; [*Aside.*

Poor enough in God's grace!

*Mary.* And all in vain!  
The Queen of Scots is married to the  
Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low  
world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past  
away;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, dearest lady,  
see your good physician.

*Mary.* Drugs—but he knows they  
cannot help me—says

That rest is all—tells me I must not  
think—

That I must rest—I shall rest by and  
by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and  
when he springs

And maims himself against the bars,  
say 'rest.'

Why, you must kill him if you would  
have him rest—

Dead or alive, you cannot make him  
happy.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Majesty has  
lived so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy  
Church,

I trust that God will make you happy  
yet.

*Mary.* What is the strange thing  
happiness? Sit down here.

Tell me thine happiest hour.

*Lady Clarence.* I will, if that  
May make your Grace forget yourself  
a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our  
field

For twenty miles, where the black  
crow flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the  
way

As if itself were happy. It was May-  
time,

And I was walking with the man I  
loved.

I loved him, but I thought I was not  
loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild  
brook

Speak for us—till he stoop'd and  
gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-  
nots,

Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave  
it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,  
And put it in my bosom, and all at  
once

I felt his arms about me, and his lips—

*Mary.* O God! I have been too  
slack, too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among  
our guards—

Nobles we dared not touch. We have  
but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and  
women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm,  
wreck, wrath,—  
We have so play'd the coward; but by  
God's grace,  
We'll follow Philip's leading, and set  
up  
The Holy Office here—garner the  
wheat,  
And burn the tares with unquenchable  
fire!  
Burn!—  
Fie, what a savor! tell the cooks to  
close  
The doors of all the offices below.  
Latimer!  
Sir, we are private with our women  
here—  
Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly  
fellow—  
Thou light a torch that never will go  
out!  
'Tis out—mine flames. Women, the  
Holy Father  
Has ta'en the legateship from our  
cousin Pole—  
Was that well done? and poor Pole  
pines of it,  
As I do, to the death. I am but a  
woman,  
I have no power.—Ah, weak and  
meek old man,  
Sevenfold dishonor'd even in the  
sight  
Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No  
pardon!—  
Why, that was false; there is the right  
hand still  
Beckons me hence.  
Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for  
treason,  
Remember that! 't was I and Bonner  
did it,  
And Pole; we are three to one—Have  
you found mercy there,  
Grant it me here—and see, he smiles  
and goes,  
Gentle as in life.  
Alice. Madam, who goes? King  
Philip?  
Mary. No, Philip comes and goes,  
but never goes.  
Women, when I am dead,

Open my heart, and there you will  
find written  
Two names, Philip and Calais; open  
his,—  
So that he have one,—  
You will find Philip only, policy, pol-  
icy,—  
Ay, worse than that—not one hour  
true to me!  
Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd  
vice!  
Adulterous to the very heart of hell!  
Hast thou a knife?  
Alice. Ay, madam, but o' God's  
mercy—  
Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would  
peril mine own soul  
By slaughter of the body? I could  
not, girl,  
Not this way—callous with a con-  
stant stripe,  
Unwoundable. The knife!  
Alice. Take heed, take heed!  
The blade is keen as death.  
Mary. This Philip shall not  
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;  
Old, miserable, diseased,  
Incapable of children. Come thou  
down.  
[Cuts out the picture and throws  
it down.  
Lie there. (Wails.) O God, I have  
kill'd my Philip!  
Alice. No,  
Madam, you have but cut the canvas  
out;  
We can replace it.  
Mary. All is well then; rest—  
I will to rest; he said I must have  
rest.  
[Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.  
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? re-  
volt?  
A new Northumberland, anothe:  
Wyatt?  
I'll fight it on the threshold of the  
grave.  
Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal  
sister comes to see you.  
Mary. I will not see her.  
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be  
my sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your arm. [To Lady Clarence.  
O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn smile  
Among thy patient wrinkles—help me hence. [Exeunt.

*The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZABETH and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.*

*Elizabeth.* Good counsel yours.—  
No one in waiting? still,  
As if the chamberlain were Death himself!  
The room she sleeps in—is not this the way?  
No, that way there are voices. Am I too late?

*Cecil.* . . . God guide me lest I lose the way! [Exit Elizabeth.

*Cecil.* Many points weather'd, many perilous ones,  
At last a harbor opens; but therein Sunk rocks—they need fine steering—much it is  
To be nor mad nor bigot—have a mind—  
Nor let priests' talk, or dream of worlds to be,  
Micolor things about her—sudden touches  
For him, or him—sunk rocks; no passionate faith—  
But—if let be—balance and compromise;  
Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her—a Tudor  
School'd by the shadow of death—a Boleyn, too,  
Glancing across the Tudor—not so well.

*Enter ALICE.*

How is the good Queen now?

*Alice.* Away from Philip.  
Back in her childhood—prattling to her mother  
Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,  
And childlike-jealous of him again—and once  
She thank'd her father sweetly for his book

Against that godless German. Ah, those days  
Were happy. It was never merry world

In England since the Bible came among us.

*Cecil.* And who says that?

*Alice.* It is a saying among the Catholics.

*Cecil.* It never will be merry world in England

Till all men have their Bible, rich and poor.

*Alice.* The Queen is dying, or you dare not say it.

*Enter ELIZABETH.*

*Elizabeth.* The Queen is dead.

*Cecil.* Then here she stands! my homage.

*Elizabeth.* She knew me, and acknowledged me her heir,  
Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the Faith;  
Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,  
More beautiful than in life. Why would you vex yourself,  
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart

To be your Queen. To reign is restless fence,

Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with the dead,

Her life was winter, for her spring was nipt;

And she loved much: pray God she be forgiven!

*Cecil.* Peace with the dead, who never were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much—I needs must say—

That never English monarch dying left

England so little.

*Elizabeth.* But with Cecil's aid  
And others, if our person be secured  
From traitor stabs—we will make England great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE  
COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.*

*Lords.* God save Elizabeth, the  
Queen of England!

*Bagenhall.* God save the Crown!  
the Papacy is no more.

*Paget (aside).* Are we so sure of  
that?

*Acclamation.* God save the Queen!

# HAROLD

## A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

VICEROY AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON,—After old-world records—such as Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON

### SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here—May breath and bloom of spring—  
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm  
Crying, 'With my false egg I overwhelm  
The native nest'; and fancy hears the ring  
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,  
And Saxon battle-axe clang on Norman helm.  
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm;  
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.  
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!  
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare  
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;  
Might, right ay, good, so all things make for good—  
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where  
Each stands full face with all he did below.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*

ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*

THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*

TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*

GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*

LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

} Sons of Godwin

WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble*.<sup>1</sup>

EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*

MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig* } *Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*

GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*

GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*

ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*

HUGH MARCOT, *a Norman Monk.*

OSGOD and ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*

THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*

ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*

EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.  
 . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus Compater Heraldī. (*Guy of Amiens*,  
 37.)

# HAROLD

## ACT I

SCENE I.—LONDON. THE KING'S  
PALACE

(*A comet seen through the open  
window.*)

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERs *talking  
together.*

*First Courtier.* Lo! there once more  
—this is the seventh night!

Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd  
scourge

Of England!

*Second Courtier.* Horrible!

*First Courtier.* Look you, there 's a  
star

That dances in it as mad with agony!

*Third Courtier.* Ay, like a spirit in  
hell who skips and flies

To right and left, and cannot scape  
the flame.

*Second Courtier.* Steam'd upward  
from the undescendible

Abysm.

*First Courtier.* Or floated down-  
ward from the throne

Of God Almighty.

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
What thinkest thou this mean?

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady!

*Aldwyth.* Doth this affright thee?

*Gamel.* Mightily, my dear lady!

*Aldwyth.* Stand by me then, and  
look upon my face,

Not on the comet.

*Enter MORCAR.*

Brother! why so pale?

*Morcar.* It glares in heaven, it flares  
upon the Thames,

The people are as thick as bees be-  
low,

They hum like bees,—they cannot  
speak—for awe;

Look to the skies, then to the river,  
strike

Their hearts, and hold their babies up  
to it.

I think that they would Molochize  
them too,

To have the heavens clear.

*Aldwyth.* They fright not me.

*Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.*

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he  
thinks of this!

*Morcar.* Lord Leofwin, dost thou  
believe that these

Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder  
mean

The doom of England and the wrath  
of Heaven?

*Bishop of London (passing).* Did  
ye not cast with bestial vio-  
lence

Our holy Norman bishops down from  
all

Their thrones in England? I alone re-  
main.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?

*Leofwin.* With us, or thee?

*Bishop of London.* Did ye not out-  
law your archbishop Robert,

Robert of Jumièges—well-nigh mur-  
der him too?

Is there no reason for the wrath of  
Heaven?

*Leofwin.* Why, then the wrath of  
Heaven hath three tails,

The devil only one.

[*Exit Bishop of London.*]

*Enter* ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.

Ask *our* archbishop.

Stigand should know the purposes of Heaven.

*Stigand.* Not I. I cannot read the face of heaven;

Perhaps our vines will grow the better for it.

*Leofwin* (*laughing*). He can but read the King's face on his coins.

*Stigand.* Ay, ay, young lord, *there* the King's face is power.

*Gurth.* O father, mock not at a public fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven

A harm to England?

*Stigand.* Ask it of King Edward! And he may tell thee *I* am a harm to England.

Old uncanonical Stigand—ask of *me* Who had my pallium from an Antipope!

Not he the man—for in our windy world

What 's up is faith, what 's down is heresy.

Our friends, the Normans, help to shake his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son, And cannot answer sanely.—What it means?

Ask our broad earl.

[*Pointing to Harold, who enters.*

*Harold* (*seeing Gamel*). Hail, Gamel, son of Orm!

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not

Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

*Gamel.* Art thou sick, good earl?

*Harold.* Sick as an autumn swallow for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound

Beyond the seas—a change! When camest thou hither?

*Gamel.* To-day, good earl.

*Harold.* Is the North quiet, Gamel?

*Gamel.* Nay, there be murmurs, for thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet—

Nothing as yet.

*Harold.* Stand by him, mine old friend,

Thou art a great voice in Northumberland!

Advise him; speak him sweetly, he will hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams.—Well, father Stigand—

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*

*Stigand* (*pointing to the comet*). War there, my son? is that the doom of England?

*Harold.* Why not the doom of all the world as well?

For all the world sees it as well as England.

These meteors came and went before our day.

Not harming any; it threatens us no more

Than French or Norman. War? the worst that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool, Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's credit

Makes it on earth—but look, where Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.

He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of late.

*Leofwin.* And *he* hath learnt, despite the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the King's hand.

*Gurth.* I trust the kingly touch that cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of him.



*Leofwin.* He hath as much of cat as tiger in him.  
Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.

*Harold.* Nay! Better die than lie!

*Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.*

*Edward.* In heaven signs!  
Signs upon earth! signs everywhere!  
your priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!  
They scarce can read their Psalter;  
and your churches

Uncloth, unhandsome, while in Normanland

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells

In statelier shrines. I say not this, as being

Half Norman-blooded, nor, as some have held,

Because I love the Norman better—no,

But dreading God's revenge upon this realm

For narrowness and coldness; and I say it

For the last time perchance, before I go

To find the sweet refreshment of the Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity;  
I have builded the great church of

Holy Peter;  
I have wrought miracles—to God the glory!—

And miracles will in my name be wrought

Hereafter.—I have fought the fight and go—

I see the flashing of the gates of pearl—

And it is well with me, tho' some of you

Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am gone

Woe, woe to England! I have had a vision;

The Seven Sleepers in the cave at Ephesus

Have turn'd from right to left.

*Harold.* My most dear master,

What matters? let them turn from left to right

And sleep again.

*Tostig.* Too hardy with thy King!  
A life of prayer and fasting well may see

Deeper into the mysteries of heaven  
Than thou, good brother.

*Aldwyth (aside).* Sees he into thine,

That thou wouldst have his promise for the crown?

*Edward.* Tostig says true; my son,  
thou art too hard,

Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and heaven;

But heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,

Play into one another, and weave the web

That may confound thee yet.

*Harold.* Nay, I trust not,  
For I have served thee long and honestly.

*Edward.* I know it, son! I am not thankless; thou

Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me

The weight of this poor crown, and left me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better one.

Twelve years of service! England loves thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

*Aldwyth (aside).* So, not Tostig!

*Harold.* And after those twelve years a boon, my King,

Respite, a holiday,—thyself wast wont

To love the chase,—thy leave to set my feet

On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas!

*Edward.* What, with this flaming horror overhead?

*Harold.* Well, when it passes then.

*Edward.* Ay, if it pass  
Go not to Normandy—go not to Normandy.

*Harold.* And wherefore not, my King, to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there

For my dead father's loyalty to thee?  
I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.

*Edward.* Not thee, my son; some other messenger,

*Harold.* And why not me, my lord, to Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine?

*Edward.* I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.

*Harold.* Because my father drove the Normans out of England?—That was many a summer gone—

Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

*Edward.* Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.

*Harold.* Why, then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

*Edward.* Be there not fair woods and fields

In England? Wilful, wilful! Go—the Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out

And homeward!—Tostig, I am faint again.—

Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and followed by Stigand, Morcar, and Courtiers.*]

*Harold.* What lies upon the mind of our good King,  
That he should harp this way on Normandy?

*Queen.* Brother, the King is wiser than he seems;  
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the King.

*Harold.* And love should know; and—be the King so wise,—  
Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems.

I love the man, but not his phantasies.

*Re-enter TOSTIG.*

Well, brother,  
When didst thou hear from thy Northumbria?

*Tostig.* When did I hear aught but this '*When*' from thee?

Leave me alone, brother, with my Northumbria;

She is *my* mistress, let *me* look to her!  
The King hath made me earl; make me not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made me earl!

*Harold.* No, Tostig—lest I make myself a fool.

Who made the King who made thee make thee earl.

*Tostig.* Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon go wild.

*Gurth.* Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so wild

But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.

*Harold.* So says old Gurth, not I; yet hear! thine earldom,

Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old crown

Is yet a force among them, a sun set  
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house

To strike thee down by—nay, this ghastly glare

May heat their fancies.

*Tostig.* My most worthy brother,  
Thou art the quietest man in all the world—

Ay, ay, and wise in peace and great in war—

Pray God the people choose thee for their king!

But all the powers of the house of Godwin

Are not enframed in thee.

*Harold.* Thank the Saints, no!  
But thou hast drain'd them shallow—by thy tolls,

And thou art ever here about the King.

Thine absence well may seem a want of care.

Cling to their love; for, now the sons  
 of Godwin  
 Sit topmost in the field of England,  
 envy,  
 Like the rough bear beneath the tree,  
 good brother,  
 Waits till the man let go.  
*Tostig.* Good counsel truly!  
 I heard from my Northumbria yester-  
 day.

*Harold.* How goes it then with thy  
 Northumbria? Well?

*Tostig.* And wouldst thou that it  
 went aught else than well?

*Harold.* I would it went as well as  
 with mine earldom,  
 Leofwin's and Gurth's.

*Tostig.* Ye govern milder men.

*Gurth.* We have made them milder  
 by just government.

*Tostig.* Ay, ever give yourselves  
 your own good word.

*Leofwin.* An honest gift, by all the  
 Saints, if giver

And taker be but honest! but they  
 bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest  
 world

Will not believe them.

*Harold.* I may tell thee, *Tostig*,  
 I heard from thy Northumberland to-  
 day.

*Tostig.* From spies of thine to spy  
 my nakedness

In my poor North.

*Harold.* There is a movement there,  
 A blind one—nothing yet.

*Tostig.* Crush it at once  
 With all the power I have!—I must  
 —I will!—

Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wis-  
 dom there,

My wise head-shaking *Harold*?

*Harold.* Make not thou  
 The nothing something. Wisdom when  
 in power

And wisest should not frown as  
 Power, but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true  
*must*

Shall make her strike as Power: but  
 when to strike—

O *Tostig*, O dear brother—if they  
 prance,

Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear  
 and run

And break both neck and axle.

*Tostig.* Good again!

Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour  
 not water

In the full vessel running out at top  
 To swamp the house.

*Leofwin.* Nor thou be a wild thing  
 Out of the waste, to turn and bite the  
 hand

Would help thee from the trap.

*Tostig.* Thou playest in tune.

*Leofwin.* To the deaf adder thee,  
 that wilt not dance

However wisely charm'd.

*Tostig.* No more, no more!

*Gurth.* I likewise cry 'no more.' Un-  
 wholesome talk

For Godwin's house! *Leofwin*, thou  
 hast a tongue!

*Tostig*, thou look'st as thou wouldst  
 spring upon him.

Saint Olaf, not while I am by! Come,  
 come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in  
 unity;

Let kith and kin stand close as our  
 shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast  
 a tongue,

And *Tostig* is not stout enough to bear  
 it.

Vex him not, *Leofwin*.

*Tostig.* No, I am not vext,—  
 Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.  
 I have to make report of my good  
 earldom

To the good King who gave it—not to  
 you—

Not any of you.—I am not vext at all.

*Harold.* The King? the King is ever  
 at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state  
 I am the King.

*Tostig.* That shalt thou never be  
 If I can thwart thee.

*Harold.* Brother, brother!

*Tostig.* Away!

[Exit *Tostig*.]

*Queen.* Spite of this grisly star ye  
three must gall  
Poor Tostig.

*Leofwin.* Tostig, sister, galls himself;

He cannot smell a rose but pricks his  
nose

Against the thorn, and rails against  
the rose.

*Queen.* I am the only rose of all  
the stock

That never thorn'd him; Edward  
loves him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated  
him.

Why—how they fought when boys—  
and, Holy Mary!

How Harold used to beat him!

*Harold.* Why, boys will fight.  
Leofwin would often fight me, and I  
beat him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had  
much ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth.  
Old Gurth,

We fought like great States for grave  
cause; but Tostig—

On a sudden—at a something—for a  
nothing—

The boy would fist me hard, and when  
we fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none the  
less,

Till thou wouldst get him all apart,  
and tell him

That where he was but worsted he was  
wrong'd.

Ah! thou hast taught the King to spoil  
him too;

Now the spoilt child sways both. Take  
heed, take heed;

Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and  
girl no more.

Side not with Tostig in any violence,  
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the  
violence.

*Queen.* Come, fall not foul on me. I  
leave thee, brother.

*Harold.* Nay, my good sister—  
[*Exeunt Queen, Harold, Gurth,  
and Leofwin.*]

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,

What thinkest thou this means?

[*Pointing to the comet.*]

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady,  
War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

*Aldwyth.* It means the fall of Tostig  
from his earldom.

*Gamel.* That were too small a matter  
for a comet!

*Aldwyth.* It means the lifting of the  
house of Alfgar.

*Gamel.* Too small! a comet would  
not show for that!

*Aldwyth.* Not small for thee, if thou  
canst compass it.

*Gamel.* Thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as I can give  
thee, man;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant.

Stir up thy people; oust him!

*Gamel.* And thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as thou canst  
bear.

*Gamel.* I can bear all,  
And not be giddy.

*Aldwyth.* No more now; to-morrow.

## SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE  
NEAR LONDON. SUNSET

*Edith.* Mad for thy mate, passionate  
nightingale!—

I love thee for it—ay, but stay a moment;

*He* can but stay a moment; he is going.

I fain would hear him coming!—near  
me—near,

Somewhere—to draw him nearer with  
a charm

Like thine to thine!

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,  
Welcome Love with a smile and a song.  
Love can stay but a little while.  
Why cannot he stay? they call him  
away.

Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;  
Love will stay for a whole life long.

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* The nightingales in Haver-  
ingatte-Bower  
Sang out their loves so loud that Ed-  
ward's prayers  
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them  
dumb, and thus  
I dumb thee too, my wingless night-  
ingale! [*Kissing her.*]

*Edith.* Thou art my music! Would  
their wings were mine  
To follow thee to Flanders! Must  
thou go?

*Harold.* Not must, but will. It is  
but for one moon.

*Edith.* Leaving so many foes in Ed-  
ward's hall  
To league against thy weal. The Lady  
Aldwyth  
Was here to-day, and when she  
touch'd on thee  
She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure  
she hates thee,  
Pants for thy blood.

*Harold.* Well, I have given her  
cause—  
I fear no woman.

*Edith.* Hate not one who felt  
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure  
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so  
praised  
The convent and lone life—within the  
pale—

Beyond the passion. Nay—she held  
with Edward,  
At least methought she held with holy  
Edward,  
That marriage was half sin.

*Harold.* A lesson worth  
Finger and thumb—thus (*snaps his  
fingers*).

And my answer to it—  
See here—an interwoven H and E!  
Take thou this ring; I will demand his  
ward  
From Edward when I come again. Ay,  
would she?  
She to shut up my blossom in the  
dark!

Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine  
arms.

*Edith* (*taking the ring*). Yea, but  
Earl Tostig—

*Harold.* That 's a truer fear!  
For if the North take fire, I should  
be back;

I shall be, soon enough.

*Edith.* Ay, but last night  
An evil dream that ever came and  
went—

*Harold.* A gnat that vexed thy pil-  
low! Had I been by,  
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl,  
what was it?

*Edith.* O that thou wert not going!  
For so methought it was our mar-  
riage-morn,  
And while we stood together, a dead  
man

Rose from behind the altar, tore away  
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal  
veil;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church  
all fill'd  
With dead men upright from their  
graves, and all

The dead men made at thee to murder  
thee,  
But thou didst back thyself against a  
pillar,

And strike among them with thy  
battle-axe—  
There, what a dream!

*Harold.* Well, well—a dream—no  
more!

*Edith.* Did not Heaven speak to  
men in dreams of old?

*Harold.* Ay—well—of old. I tell  
thee what, my child;  
Thou hast misread this merry dream  
of thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood  
For smooth stone columns of the  
sanctuary,

The shadows of a hundred fat dead  
deer  
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the  
battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have been  
the bow.—

Come, thou shalt dream no more such  
dreams; I swear it,

By mine own eyes—and these two  
sapphires—these  
Twin rubies, that are amulets against  
all  
The kisses of all kind of womankind  
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me  
back  
To tumble at thy feet.

*Edith.* That would but shame me,  
Rather than make me vain. The sea  
may roll  
Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the liv-  
ing rock  
Which guards the land.

*Harold.* Except it be a soft one,  
And under-eaten to the fall. Mine  
amulet—

This last—upon thine eyelids, to shut  
in  
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and  
thou shalt see

My greyhounds fleeting like a beam of  
light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells  
in heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet  
are heaven's;

Guess what they be.

*Edith.* He cannot guess who knows.  
Farewell, my king.

*Harold.* Not yet, but then—my  
queen. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.*

*Aldwyth.* The kiss that charms  
thine eyelids into sleep  
Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I  
could love him

More, tenfold, than this fearful child  
can do;

Griffyth I hated; why not hate the foe  
Of England? Griffyth, when I saw him  
flee,

Chased deer-like up his mountains, all  
the blood

That should have only pulsed for  
Griffyth beat

For his pursuer. I love him, or think I  
love him.

If he were King of England, I his  
queen,

I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love  
him.—

She must be cloister'd somehow, lest  
the king

Should yield his ward to Harold's will.  
What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not  
love.—

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I  
play

The craftier Tostig with him? fawr  
upon him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint  
than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed  
relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus,  
Harold might hate me; he is broad  
and honest,

Breathing an easy gladness—not like  
Aldwyth—

For which I strangely love him.  
Should not England

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds  
that part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of  
Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble  
Aldwyth!

Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig,  
Edward hath made him earl; he would  
be king.

The dog that snapt the shadow dropt  
the bone.

I trust he may do well, this Gamel,  
whom

I play upon, that he may play the note  
Whereat the dog shall howl and run,  
and Harold

Hear the King's music, all alone with  
him,

Pronounced his heir of England.

I see the goal and half the way to  
it.—

Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake  
Of England's wholeness — so — to  
shake the North

With earthquake and disruption—  
some division—

Then fling mine own fair person in  
the gap

A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,

A scapegoat marriage—all the sins of  
both

The houses on mine head—then a fair  
life

And bless the Queen of England!

*Morcar (coming from the thicket).*

Art thou assured

By this, that Harold loves but Edith?

*Aldwyth.* *Morcar!*

Why creep'st thou like a timorous  
beast of prey

Out of the bush by night?

*Morcar.* I follow'd thee.

*Aldwyth.* Follow my lead, and I will  
make thee earl.

*Morcar.* What lead then?

*Aldwyth.* Thou shalt flash it se-  
cretly

Among the good Northumbrian folk,  
that I—

That Harold loves me—yea, and pres-  
ently

That I and Harold are betroth'd—and  
last—

Perchance that Harold wrongs me;  
tho' I would not

That it should come to that.

*Morcar.* I will both flash  
And thunder for thee.

*Aldwyth.* I said 'secretly';  
It is the flash that murders, the poor  
thunder

Never harm'd head.

*Morcar.* But thunder may bring  
down

That which the flash hath stricken.

*Aldwyth.* Down with Tostig!  
That first of all.—And when doth  
Harold go?

*Morcar.* To-morrow—first to Bos-  
ham, then to Flanders.

*Aldwyth.* Not to come back till  
Tostig shall have shown  
And redden'd with his people's blood  
the teeth

That shall be broken by us—yea, and  
thou

Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and  
dream thyself

Their chosen earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*

*Morcar.* Earl first, and after that  
Who knows I may not dream myself  
their king?

## ACT II

### SCENE I.—SEASHORE. PONTHEIU. NIGHT

*HAROLD and his MEN, wrecked.*

*Harold.* Friends, in that last inhos-  
pitable plunge  
Our boat hath burst her ribs; but ours  
are whole;

I have but bark'd my hands.

*Attendant.* I dug mine into  
My old fast friend the shore, and  
clinging thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the  
deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my  
legs,

And then I rose and ran. The blast  
that came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly—  
Put thou the comet and this blast to-  
gether—

*Harold.* Put thou thyself and  
mother-wit together.  
Be not a fool!

*Enter FISHERMEN with torches,*  
*HAROLD going up to one of*  
*them, ROLF.*

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp!  
Wolf of the shore! dog, with thy  
lying lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks  
of thine!

*Rolf.* Ay, but thou liest as loud as  
the black herring-pond behind thee.  
We be fishermen; I came to see after  
my nets.

*Harold.* To drag us into them. Fish-  
ermen? devils!

Who, while ye fish for men with your  
false fires,

Let the great devil fish for your own  
souls.

*Rolf.* Nay then, we be liker the  
blessed Apostles; *they* were fishers of  
men, Father Jean says.

*Harold.* I had liefer that the fish  
had swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there  
were such devils.  
What 's to be done?

[*To his Men—goes apart with them.*]

*Fisherman.* Rolf, what fish did  
swallow Jonah?

*Rolf.* A whale!

*Fisherman.* Then a whale to a  
whelk we have swallowed the King of  
England. I saw him over there. Look  
thee, Rolf, when I was down in the  
fever, *she* was down with the hunger,  
and thou didst stand by her and give  
her thy crabs, and set her up again,  
till now, by the patient Saints, she 's  
as crabb'd as ever.

*Rolf.* And I 'll give her my crabs  
again, when thou art down again.

*Fisherman.* I thank thee, Rolf. Run  
thou to Count Guy; he is hard at  
hand. Tell him what hath crept into  
our creel, and he will fee thee as freely  
as he will wrench this outlander's ran-  
som out of him—and why not? for  
what right had he to get himself  
wrecked on another man's land?

*Rolf.* Thou art the human-hearted-  
est, Christian-charitiest of all crab-  
catchers. Share and share alike!

[*Exit.*]

*Harold (to Fisherman).* Fellow,  
dost thou catch crabs?

*Fisherman.* As few as I may in a  
wind, and less than I would in a calm.  
Ay!

*Harold.* I have a mind that thou  
shalt catch no more.

*Fisherman.* How?

*Harold.* I have a mind to brain thee  
with mine axe.

*Fisherman.* Ay, do, do, and our  
great count-crab will make his nippers  
meet in thine heart; he 'll sweat it  
out thee, he 'll sweat it out of thee!  
Look, he 's here! He 'll speak for him-  
self. Hold thine own, if thou canst!

*Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.*

*Harold.* Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

*Guy.* Harold, Earl of Wessex!

*Harold.* Thy villains with their  
lying lights have wreck'd us!

*Guy.* Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

*Harold.* In mine earldom  
A man may hang gold bracelets on a  
bush,

And leave them for a year, and com-  
ing back

Find them again.

*Guy.* Thou art a mighty man  
In thine own earldom!

*Harold.* Were such murderous liars  
In Wessex—if I caught them, they  
should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks, our sea-  
mew

Winging their only wail!

*Guy.* Ay, but my men  
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed  
of God;—

What hinders me to hold with mine  
own men?

*Harold.* The Christian manhood of  
the man who reigns!

*Guy.* Ay, rave thy worst, but in our  
oubliettes

Thou shalt or rot or ransom.—Hale  
him hence!

[*To one of his Attendants.*]  
Fly thou to William; tell him we have  
Harold.

## SCENE II

## BAYEUX. PALACE

COUNT WILLIAM *and* WILLIAM MALET.

*William.* We hold our Saxon wood-  
cock in the springe,

But he begins to flutter. As I think  
He was thine host in England when I  
went

To visit Edward.

*Malet.* Yea, and there, my lord,  
To make allowance for their rougher  
fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

*William.* Thou art his friend. Thou  
know'st my claim on England  
Thro' Edward's promise. We have him  
in the toils;



And it were well if thou shouldst let  
him feel

How dense a fold of danger nets him  
round,

So that he bristle himself against my  
will.

*Malet.* What would I do, my lord,  
if I were you?

*William.* What wouldst thou do?

*Malet.* My lord, he is thy guest.

*William.* Nay, by the splendor of  
God, no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me  
by

To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for  
the fate

Which hunted *him* when that un-  
Saxon blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high  
heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave  
and crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach; where  
our friend Guy

Had wrung his ransom from him by  
the rack,

But that I stept between and pur-  
chased him,

Translating his captivity from Guy  
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where  
he sits

My ransom'd prisoner.

*Malet.* Well, if not with gold,  
With golden deeds and iron strokes  
that brought

Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier  
close

Than else had been, he paid his ran-  
som back.

*William.* So that henceforth they  
are not like to league

With Harold against *me*.

*Malet.* A marvel, how  
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon  
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd  
Normans up

To fight for thee again!

*William.* Perchance against  
Their saver, save thou save him from  
himself.

*Malet.* But I should let him home  
again, my lord.

*William.* Simple! let fly the bird  
within the hand,  
To catch the bird again within the  
bush!

No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash  
with me;

I want his voice in England for the  
crown,

I want thy voice with him to bring  
him round;

And being brave he must be subtly  
cow'd,

And being truthful wrought upon to  
swear

Vows that he dare not break. England  
our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my  
dear friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself  
shalt have

Large lordship there of lands and ter-  
ritory.

*Malet.* I knew thy purpose; he and  
Wulfnoth never

Have met, except in public; shall  
they meet

In private? I have often talk'd with  
Wulfnoth,

And stuff'd the boy with fears, that  
these may act

On Harold when they meet.

*William.* Then let them meet!

*Malet.* I can but love this noble,  
honest Harold.

*William.* Love him! why not? thine  
is a loving office,

I have commission'd thee to save the  
man.

Help the good ship, showing the  
sunken rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

*Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.*

*William Rufus.* Father.

*William.* Well, boy.

*William Rufus.* They have taken  
away the toy thou gavest me,  
The Norman knight.

*William.* Why, boy?

*William Rufus.* Because I broke

The horse's leg—it was mine own to break;

I like to have my toys, and break them too.

*William.* Well, thou shalt have another Norman knight.

*William Rufus.* And may I break his legs?

*William.* Yea,—get thee gone!

*William Rufus.* I'll tell them I have had my way with thee. [*Exit.*]

*Malet.* I never knew thee check thy will for aught

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

*William.* Who shall be kings of England. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

*Malet.* But there the great Assembly choose their king,  
The choice of England is the voice of England.

*William.* I will be King of England by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

*Malet.* Can that be?

*William.* The voice of any people is the sword

That guards them, or the sword that beats them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will be—kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

*Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground.*

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.

Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind.

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word).*

*Which way does it blow?*

*William.* Blowing for England, ha? Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.

*Harold.* Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd us,  
Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally,

*William.* And thou for us hast fought as loyally,  
Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

*Harold.* Good!

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy  
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,

Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home with us,

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

*William.* Stay—as yet  
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted

The splendors of our court.

*Harold.* I am in no mood;  
I should be as the shadow of a cloud  
Crossing your light.

*William.* Nay, rest a week or two,  
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,

And send thee back among thine island mists

With laughter.

*Harold.* Count, I thank thee, but had rather

Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs,

Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.

*William.* Why if thou wilt, so let it be—thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality

To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf

For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu,—yet to us, in faith,

A happy one—whereby we came to know

Thy valor and thy value, noble earl.  
 Ay, and perchance a happy one for  
     thee,  
 Provided—I will go with thee to-  
     morrow—  
 Nay—but there be conditions, easy  
     ones,  
 So thou, fair friend, will take them  
     easily.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord, there is a post from  
     over seas

With news for thee. [*Exit Page.*

*William.* Come, Malet, let us hear!

[*Exeunt Count William and Malet.*

*Harold.* Conditions? What condi-  
     tions? pay him back

His ransom? 'easy'—that were easy  
     —nay—

No money-lover he! What said the  
     king?

'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'  
 And fate hath blown me hither, bound  
     me too

With bitter obligation to the Count—  
 Have I not fought it out? What did  
     he mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in  
     his eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls  
     oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half  
     the heaven.

Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out. A Man-at-  
     arms follows him.*

*Harold (to the Man-at-arms).* I  
     need thee not. Why dost thou  
     follow me?

*Man-at-arms.* I have the Count's  
     commands to follow thee.

*Harold.* What then? Am I in danger  
     in this court?

*Man-at-arms.* I cannot tell. I have  
     the Count's commands.

*Harold.* Stand out of earshot then,  
     and keep me still.

In eyeshot.

*Man-at-arms.* Yea, lord Harold.

[*Withdraws.*

*Harold.* And arm'd men

Ever keep watch beside my chamber  
     door,

And if I walk within the lonely wood,  
 There is an arm'd man ever glides be-  
     hind!

*Enter MALET.*

Why am I follow'd, haunted, har-  
     ass'd, watch'd?

See yonder!

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*

*Malet.* 'T is the good Count's care  
     for thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou  
     the Normans,

Or—so they deem.

*Harold.* But wherefore is the wind,  
 Which way soever the vane-arrow  
     swing,

Not ever fair for England? Why, but  
     now

He said—thou heard'st him—that I  
     must not hence

Save on conditions.

*Malet.* So in truth he said.

*Harold.* Malet, thy mother was an  
     Englishwoman;

There somewhere beats an English  
     pulse in thee!

*Malet.* Well—for my mother's sake  
     I love your England,

But for my father I love Normandy.

*Harold.* Speak for thy mother's  
     sake, and tell me true.

*Malet.* Then for my mother's sake,  
     and England's sake

That suffers in the daily want of thee,  
 Obey the Count's conditions, my  
     good friend.

*Harold.* How, Malet, if they be not  
     honorable!

*Malet.* Seem to obey them.

*Harold.* Better die than lie!

*Malet.* Choose therefore whether  
     thou wilt have thy conscience  
 White as a maiden's hand, or whether  
     England

Be shatter'd into fragments.

*Harold.* News from England?

*Malet.* Morcar and Edwin have  
     stirr'd up the thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's govern-  
ance;  
And all the North of Humber is one  
storm.

*Harold.* I should be there, Malet,  
I should be there!

*Malet.* And Tostig in his own hall  
on suspicion  
Hath massacred the thane that was  
his guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm; and there be  
more

As villainously slain.

*Harold.* The wolf! the beast!  
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More?  
What more?

What do they say? did Edward know  
of this?

*Malet.* They say his wife was know-  
ing and abetting.

*Harold.* They say his wife!—To  
marry and have no husband  
Makes the wife fool. My God, I  
should be there!

I'll hack my way to the sea.

*Malet.* Thou, canst not, Harold;  
Our duke is all between thee and the  
sea,

Our duke is all about thee like a God;  
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak  
him fair,

For he is only debonair to those  
That follow where he leads, but stark  
as death

To those that cross him.—Look thou,  
here is Wulfnoth!

I leave thee to thy talk with him  
alone;

How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad  
for home! [*Exit Malet.*]

*Harold* (*muttering*). Go not to  
Normandy—go not to Nor-  
mandy!

*Enter WULFNOTH.*

Poor brother! still a hostage!

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, and I  
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no  
more

Make blush the maiden-white of our  
tall cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself  
and hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the  
sky

With free sea-laughter—never—save  
indeed

Thou canst make yield this iron-  
mooded duke

To let me go.

*Harold.* Why, brother, so he will;  
But on conditions. Canst thou guess  
at them?

*Wulfnoth.* Draw nearer,—I was in  
the corridor,

I saw him coming with his brother  
Odo

The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

*Harold.* They did thee wrong who  
made thee hostage; thou

Wast ever fearful.

*Wulfnoth.* And he spoke—I heard  
him—

'This Harold is not of the royal blood,  
Can have no right to the crown;' and

Odo said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the  
might; he is here,

And yonder is thy keep.'

*Harold.* No, Wulfnoth, no!

*Wulfnoth.* And William laugh'd  
and swore that might was  
right,

Far as he knew in this poor world of  
ours—

'Marry, the Saints must go along with  
us,

And, brother, we will find a way,' said  
he—

Yea, yea, he would be King of Eng-  
land.

*Harold.* Never!

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, but thou must not  
this way answer *him*.

*Harold.* Is it not better still to  
speak the truth?

*Wulfnoth.* Not here, or thou wilt  
never hence nor I;

For in the racing toward this golden  
goal

He turns not right or left, but tram-  
ples flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou  
never heard

His savagery at Alençon,—the town  
Hung out raw hides along their walls,  
and cried,

‘Work for the tanner.’

*Harold.* That had anger’d me  
Had I been William.

*Wulfnoth.* Nay, but he had prisoners,

He tore their eyes out, sliced their  
hands away,

And flung them streaming o’er the  
battlements

Upon the heads of those who walk’d  
within—

O, speak him fair, Harold, for thine  
own sake!

*Harold.* Your Welshman says, ‘The  
Truth against the World,’

Much more the truth against myself.

*Wulfnoth.* Thyself?  
But for my sake, O brother! O, for  
my sake!

*Harold.* Poor Wulfnoth! do they  
not entreat thee well?

*Wulfnoth.* I see the blackness of  
my dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and be-  
yond

The merriest murmurs of their ban-  
quet clank

The shackles that will bind me to the  
wall.

*Harold.* Too fearful still.

*Wulfnoth.* O, no, no—speak him  
fair!

Call it to temporize, and not to lie;  
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.

The man that hath to foil a murder-  
ous aim

May, surely, play with words.

*Harold.* Words are the man.  
Not even for thy sake, brother, would  
I lie.

*Wulfnoth.* Then for thine Edith?

*Harold.* There thou prick’st me  
deep.

*Wulfnoth.* And for our Mother  
England?

*Harold.* Deeper still.

*Wulfnoth.* And deeper still the  
deep-down oubliette,

Down thirty feet below the smiling  
day—

In blackness—dogs’ food thrown  
upon thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,  
And the lark sings, the sweet stars

come and go,  
And men are at their markets, in their  
fields,

And woo their loves and have forgot-  
ten thee;

And thou art upright in thy living  
grave,

Where there is barely room to shift  
thy side,

And all thine England hath forgotten  
thee;

And he our lazy-pious Norman King,  
With all his Normans round him once  
again,

Counts his old beads, and hath for-  
gotten thee.

*Harold.* Thou art of my blood, and  
so methinks, my boy,

Thy fears infect me beyond reason.  
Peace!

*Wulfnoth.* And then our fiery Tos-  
tig, while thy hands

Are palsied here, if his Northum-  
brians rise

And hurl him from them,—I have  
heard the Normans

Count upon this confusion—may he  
not make

A league with William, so to bring  
him back?

*Harold.* That lies within the shadow  
of the chance.

*Wulfnoth.* And like a river in flood  
thro’ a burst dam

Descends the ruthless Norman—our  
good King

Kneels mumbling some old bone—  
our helpless folk

Are wash’d away, wailing, in their  
own blood—

*Harold.* Wailing! not warring?  
Boy, thou hast forgotten

That thou art English.

*Wulfnoth.* Then our modest  
women—

I know the Norman license—thine  
own Edith—

*Harold.* No more! I will not hear  
thee—William comes.

*Wulfnoth.* I dare not well be seen  
in talk with thee.  
Make thou not mention that I spake  
with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

*Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFICER.*

*Officer.* We have the man that rail'd  
against thy birth.

*William.* Tear out his tongue.

*Officer.* He shall not rail again.  
He said that he should see confusion  
fall

On thee and on thine house.

*William.* Tear out his eyes,  
And plunge him into prison.

*Officer.* It shall be done.

[*Exit Officer.*]

*William.* Look not amazed, fair  
earl! Better leave undone  
Than do by halves—tongueless and  
eyeless, prison'd—

*Harold.* Better methinks have slain  
the man at once!

*William.* We have respect for  
man's immortal soul,  
We seldom take man's life, except in  
war;

It frights the traitor more to maim  
and blind.

*Harold.* In mine own land I should  
have scorn'd the man,  
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him  
go.

*William.* And let him go? To slan-  
der thee again!

Yet in thine own land in thy father's  
day

They blinded my young kinsman, Al-  
fred—ay,

Some said it was thy father's deed.

*Harold.* They lied.

*William.* But thou and he—whom  
at thy word, for thou

Art known a speaker of the truth, I  
free

From this foul charge—

*Harold.* Nay, nay, he freed himself  
By oath and compurgation from the  
charge.

The King, the lords, the people clear'd  
him of it.

*William.* But thou and he drove our  
good Normans out  
From England, and this rankles in us  
yet.

Archbishop Robert hardly escaped  
with life.

*Harold.* Archbishop Robert! Rob-  
ert the Archbishop!

Robert of Jumièges, he that—

*Malet.* Quiet! quiet!

*Harold.* Count! if there sat within  
the Norman chair

A ruler all for England—one who  
fill'd

All offices, all bishoprics with Eng-  
lish—

We could not move from Dover to  
the Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishoprics—I  
say

Ye would applaud that Norman who  
should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

*William.* Why, that is reason!  
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise  
withal!

Ay, ay, but many among our Norman  
lords

Hate thee for this, and press upon  
me—saying

God and the sea have given thee to  
our hands—

To plunge thee into lifelong prison  
here;—

Yet I hold out against them, as I may,  
Yea—would hold out, yea, tho' they  
should revolt—

For thou hast done the battle in my  
cause.

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

*Harold.* I am doubly bound to thee  
—if this be so.

*William.* And I would bind thee  
more, and would myself

Be bounden to thee more.

*Harold.* Then let me hence  
With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

*William.* So we will.  
We hear he hath not long to live.

*Harold.* It may be.

*William.* Why then, the heir of  
England, who is he?

*Harold.* The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

*William.* But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,  
Will England have him king?

*Harold.* It may be, no.

*William.* And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* When he was here in Normandy,  
He loved us and we him, because we found him

A Norman of the Normans.

*Harold.* So did we.

*William.* A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded him,

He promised that if ever he were king  
In England, he would give his kingly voice

To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?

*Harold.* I learn it now.

*William.* Thou knowest I am his cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

*Harold.* Ay,

*William.* Who hath a better claim then to the crown?

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

*Harold.* None that I know—if that but hung upon

King Edward's will.

*William.* Wilt thou uphold my claim?

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Be careful of thine answer, my good friend.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* O Harold, for my sake and for thine own!

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the King have not revoked his promise.

*William.* But hath he done it then?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?

*Harold.* Ay—if the Witan will consent to this.

*William.* Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man,  
Thy voice will lead the Witan—shall I have it?

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* O Harold, if thou love thine Edith, ay.

*Harold.* Ay, if—

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Thine 'ifs' will sear thine eyes out—ay.

*William.* I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great earl of earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;

Thou shalt be verily king—all but the name—

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;

And thou be my vice-king in England. Speak.

*Wulfnoth (aside to Harold).* Ay, brother—for the sake of England—ay.

*Harold.* My lord—

*Malet (aside to Harold).* Take heed now.

*Harold.*

Ay.

*William.* I am content,  
For thou art truthful, and thy word thy bond.

To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur. [*Exit William.*]

*Malet.* Harold, I am thy friend, one life with thee,

And even as I should bless thee saving mine,

I thank thee now for having saved thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

*Harold.* For having lost myself to save myself,

Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay' for 'no'!

Ay! No!—he hath not bound me by an oath—

Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my word

## HAROLD

As break mine oath? He call'd my word my bond!

He is a liar who knows I am a liar, And makes believe that he believes my word—

The crime be on his head—not bound—no.

*[Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall Count William in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two Bishops, Odo of Bayeux being one; in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold, and on either side of it the Norman Barons.]*

*Enter a JAILOR before WILLIAM'S throne.*

*William (to Jailor).* Knave, hast thou let thy prisoner scape?

*Jailor.* Sir Count, He had but one foot, he must have hopt away, Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

*William.* Woe, knave, to thy familiar and to thee!

Give me thy keys. *[They fall clashing.]* Nay, let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.

*[The Jailor stands aside.]*

*William (to Harold).* Hast thou such trustless jailors in thy North?

*Harold.* We have few prisoners in mine earldom there, So less chance for false keepers.

*William.* We have heard Of thy just, mild, and equal governance; Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all honor!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage,

For they will not believe thee—as I believe.

*[Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.]*

Let all men here bear witness of our bond!

*[Beckons to Harold, who advances]*

*Enter MALET behind him.*

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!

Behold the jewel of Saint Pancratius Woven into the gold. Swear thou or this!

*Harold.* What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

*William (savagely).* Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

*Malet (whispering Harold).* My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

*Wulfnoth (whispering Harold).* Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

*Harold.* I swear to help thee to the crown of England—

According as King Edward promises.

*William.* Thou must swear absolutely, noble earl.

*Malet (whispering).* Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

*Wulfnoth (whispering).* Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

*Harold (putting his hand on the jewel).* I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

*William.* Thanks, truthful earl; I did not doubt thy word,

But that my barons might believe thy word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy

When thou art home in England, with thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,

I made thee swear. Show him by whom he hath sworn.

*[The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.]*

The holy bones of all the canonized



From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

*Harold.* Horrible!

[*They let the cloth fall again.*]

*William.* Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very devil's horns, the bright sky cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your standing corn,

Dabble your hearths with your own blood.—Enough!

Thou wilt not break it! I, the count—the king—

Thy friend—am grateful for thine honest oath,

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,

But softly as a bridegroom to his own.

For I shall rule according to your laws,

And make your ever-jarring earldoms move

To music and in order—Angle, Jute, Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne

Out-towering hers of France.—The wind is fair

For England now.—To-night we will be merry.

To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exeunt William and all the Norman Barons, etc.*]

*Harold.* To-night we will be merry—and to-morrow—

Juggler and bastard—bastard—he hates that most—

William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!

O God, that I were in some wide, waste field

With nothing but my battle-axe and him

To spatter his brains! Why, let earth rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans—yea, and mine own self!

Cleave heaven, and send thy Saints that I may say

Even to their faces, 'If ye side with William

Ye are not noble!' How their pointed fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son

Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,

My limbs—they are not mine—they are a liar's—

I mean to be a liar—I am not bound—

Stigand shall give me absolution for it—

Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!

*Wulfnoth.* Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

*Enter PAGE.*

*Page.* My lord! the duke awaits thee at the banquet.

*Harold.* Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.

*Page.* My lord—

*Harold.* I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,

It masks all this.

*Page.* My lord! thou art white as death.

*Harold.* With looking on the dead. Am I so white?

Thy duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

### ACT III

SCENE I.—THE KING'S PALACE.

LONDON

KING EDWARD, *dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, CURTH,*

## H A R O L D

LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED,  
ALDWYTH, and EDITH.

*Stigand.* Sleeping or dying there?  
If this be death,  
Then our great Council wait to crown  
thee king—  
Come hither, I have a power;

[To Harold.]  
They call me near, for I am close to  
thee

And England—I, old shrivell'd Sti-  
gand, I,  
Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead  
tree,

I have a power!  
See here this little key about my neck!  
There lies a treasure buried down in  
Ely.

If e'er the Norman grow too hard for  
thee,

Ask me for this at thy most need, son  
Harold,

At thy most need—not sooner.

*Harold.* So I will.

*Stigand.* Red gold—a hundred  
purses—yea, and more!

If thou canst make a wholesome use  
of these

To chink against the Norman, I do  
believe

My old crook'd spine would bud out  
two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

*Harold.* Thank thee, father!  
Thou art English, Edward too is Eng-  
lish now,

He hath cald repented of his Nor-  
manism.

*Stigand.* Ay, as the libertine re-  
pents who cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his  
dying sense

Shrills, 'Lost thro' thee!' They have  
built their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Nor-  
man adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd; our  
dear England

Is demi-Norman. He!—

[Pointing to King Edward, sleep-  
ing.]

*Harold.* I would I were

As holy and as passionless as he!  
That I might rest as calmly! Look at  
him—

The rosy face, and long down-silver-  
ing beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer  
mere.—

*Stigand.* A summer mere with sud-  
den wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How  
he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung  
him, nay,

He fain had calcin'd all Northumbria  
To one black ash, but that thy patriot  
passion,

Siding with our great Council against  
Tostig,

Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, for-  
sooth,

A conscience for his own soul, not his  
realm;

A twilight conscience lighted thro' a  
chink;

Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun  
to be,

When all the world hath learnt to  
speak the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that  
State

Which was the exception.

*Harold.* That sun may God speed!

*Stigand.* Come, Harold, shake the  
cloud off!

*Harold.* Can I, father?

Our Tostig parted cursing me and  
England;

Our sister hates us for his banish-  
ment;

He hath gone to kindle Norway  
against England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.  
For when I rode with William down

to Harfleur,  
'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot  
follow;'

Then with that friendly-fiendly smile  
of his,

'We have learnt to love him, let him  
a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty  
Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches  
Wulfnoth

I that so prized plain word and naked truth

Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

*Leofwin.* Good brother,  
By all the truths that ever priest hath preach'd,

Of all the lies that ever men have lied,  
Thine is the pardonablest.

*Harold.* Maybe so!  
I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

*Stigand.* Tut, tut, I have absolved thee. Dost thou scorn me,

Because I had my Canterbury pallium  
From one whom they disposed?

*Harold.* No, Stigand, no!

*Stigand.* Is naked truth actable in true life?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly true,

Men would but take him for the craftier liar.

*Leofwin.* Be men less delicate than the devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame the devil,

The devil is so modest.

*Gurth.* He never said it!

*Leofwin.* Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth!

*Harold.* Better to be a liar's dog, and hold

My master honest, than believe that lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot

Move one without the other. Edward wakes!—

Dazed—he hath seen a vision.

*Edward.* The green tree!  
Then a great Angel past along the highest

Crying, 'The doom of England!' and at once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword

Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree

From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it

Straight on the trunk, that, thus baptized in blood,

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles

Beyond my seeing; and the great Angel rose

And past again along the highest, crying,

'The doom of England!'—Tostig, raise my head!

[*Falls back senseless.*

*Harold (raising him).* Let Harold serve for Tostig!

*Queen.* Harold served Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!

The sickness of our saintly King, for whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself

From lack of Tostig—thou hast banish'd him.

*Harold.* Nay—but the Council, and the King himself.

*Queen.* Thou hatest him, hatest him!

*Harold (coldly).* Ay—Stigand, unriddle

This vision, canst thou?

*Stigand.* Dotage!

*Edward (starting up).* It is finish'd. I have built the Lord a house—the Lord hath dwelt

In darkness. I have built the Lord a house—

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to wall—

I have built the Lord a house—sing,  
Asaph! clash

The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet, priest!

Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo! my two pillars,

Jachin and Boaz!—

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*

Harold, Gurth,—where am I?  
Where is the charter of our Westminster?

*Stigand.* It lies beside thee, king,  
upon thy bed.

*Edward.* Sign, sign at once—take,  
sign it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth,  
and Leofwin!

Sign it, my queen!

*All.* We have sign'd it.

*Edward.* It is finish'd!

The kingliest abbey in all Christian  
lands,

The lordliest, loftiest minster ever  
built

To Holy Peter in our English isle!

Let me be buried there, and all our  
kings,

And all our just and wise and holy  
men

That shall be born hereafter. It is finish'd!

Hast thou had absolution for thine  
oath? [To Harold.

*Harold.* Stigand hath given me absolution for it.

*Edward.* Stigand is not canonical  
enough

To save thee from the wrath of Norman  
Saints.

*Stigand.* Norman enough! Be there  
no Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yonder?

*Edward.* Prelate,

The Saints are one, but those of Normanland

Are mightier than our own.—Ask it  
of Aldred. [To Harold.

*Aldred.* It shall be granted him, my  
king; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own  
mother

Is guiltier keeping this than breaking  
it.

*Edward.* O friends, I shall not overlive the day!

*Stigand.* Why, then the throne is empty. Who inherits?

For tho' we be not bound by the king's  
voice

In making of a king, yet the king's  
voice

Is much toward his making. Who inherits?

Edgar the Atheling?

*Edward.* No, no, but Harold.

I love him; he hath served me; none  
but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse is  
on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed  
bones;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

*Harold.* Not mean

To make our England Norman.

*Edward.* There spake Godwin,  
Who hated all the Normans; but their  
Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

*Edith.* O, my lord, my King!

He knew not whom he swore by.

*Edward.* Yea, I know

He knew not, but those heavenly ears  
have heard,

Their curse is on him; wilt thou bring  
another,

Edith, upon his head?

*Edith.* No, no, not I!

*Edward.* Why, then thou must not  
wed him.

*Harold.* Wherefore, wherefore?

*Edward.* O son, when thou didst  
tell me of thine oath,

I sorrow'd for my random promise  
given

To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then  
I should be king.—My son, the Saints

are virgins;

They love the white rose of virginity,  
The cold, white lily blowing in her  
cell.

I have been myself a virgin; and I  
sware

To consecrate my virgin here +  
Heaven—

The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,  
A life of lifelong prayer against the  
curse

That lies on thee and England.

*Harold.* No, no, no!

*Edward.* Treble denial of the  
tongue of flesh,  
Like Peter's when he fell, and thou  
wilt have

To wait for it like Peter. O my son!  
Are all oaths to be broken then, all  
promises

Made in our agony for help from  
Heaven?

Son, there is one who loves thee; and  
a wife,

What matters who, so she be service-  
able

In all obedience, as mine own hath  
been?

God bless thee, wedded daughter!

[*Laying his hand on the Queen's  
head.*

*Queen.* Bless thou too  
That brother whom I love beyond the  
rest,

My banish'd Tostig.

*Edward.* All the sweet Saints bless  
him!

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he  
comes!

And let him pass unscathed; he loves  
me, Harold!

Be kindly to the Normans left among  
us,

Who follow'd me for love! and dear  
son, swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn  
vow

Accomplish'd.

*Harold.* Nay, dear lord, for I have  
sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

*Edward.* Thou wilt not swear?

*Harold.* I cannot.

*Edward.* Then on thee remains the  
curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her; and on  
thee,

Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The King swoons; Edith falls  
and kneels by the couch.*

*Stigand.* He hath swoon'd.

Death?—no, as yet a breath.

*Harold.* Look up! look up!  
Edith!

*Aldred.* Confuse her not; she hath  
begun

Her lifelong prayer for thee.

*Aldwyth.* O noble Harold,  
I would thou couldst have sworn.

*Harold.* For thine own pleasure?

*Aldwyth.* No, but to please our dy-  
ing King, and those

Who make thy good their own—all  
England, earl.

*Aldred.* I would thou couldst have  
sworn. Our holy King

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy  
Church

To save thee from the curse.

*Harold.* Alas! poor man,  
*His* promise brought it on me.

*Aldred.* O good son!  
That knowledge made him all the  
carefuller

To find a means whereby the curse  
might glance

From thee and England.

*Harold.* Father, we so loved—

*Aldred.* The more the love, the  
mightier is the prayer;

The more the love, the more accept-  
able

The sacrifice of both your loves to  
Heaven.

No sacrifice to Heaven, no help from  
Heaven;

That runs thro' all the faiths of all  
the world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the  
King

Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and  
seen

A shadowing horror; there are signs  
in heaven—

*Harold.* Your comet came and  
went.

*Aldred.* And signs on earth!

Knowest thou Senlac hill?

*Harold.* I know all Sussex;  
A good entrenchment for a perilous  
hour!

*Aldred.* Pray God that come not  
suddenly! There is one

Who passing by that hill three nights ago—

He shook so that he scarce could out with it—

Heard, heard—

*Harold.* The wind in his hair?

*Aldred.* A ghostly horn

Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns,

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,

And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh—

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves—

*Harold.* At Senlac?

*Aldred.* Senlac.

*Edward (waking).* Senlac! Sanguelac, The Lake of Blood!

*Stigand.* This lightning before death

Plays on the word,—and Normanizes too!

*Harold.* Hush, father, hush!

*Edward.* Thou uncanonical fool, Wilt thou play with the thunder?

North and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are blown

Before a never-ending blast, and hiss Against the blaze they cannot quench

—a lake,

A sea of blood—we are drown'd in blood—for God

Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has drawn the bow—

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the arrow!

*[Dies.]* *Stigand.* It is the arrow of death in his own heart—

And our great Council wait to crown thee King.

SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE  
NEAR LONDON

*Edith.* Crown'd, crown'd and lost,  
crown'd King—and lost to me!

(*Singing.*)

Two young lovers in winter weather

None to guide them,

Walk'd at night on the misty heather;

Night, as black as a raven's feather;

Both were lost and found together,

None beside them.

That is the burthen of it—lost and found

Together in the cruel river Swale

A hundred years ago; and there's another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly:

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, O whither? into the river,

Where we two may be lost together,

And lost for ever? 'O, never! O, never!

Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the pale forbidden

By Holy Church; but who shall say? the truth

Was lost in that fierce North, where they were lost,

Where all good things are lost, where Tostig lost

The good hearts of his people. It is Harold!

*Enter HAROLD.*

Harold the King!

*Harold.* Call me not King, but Harold.

*Edith.* Nay, thou art King!

*Harold.* Thine, thine, or King or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping; turn not thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be King of the moment to thee, and command

That kiss my due when subject, which will make

My kingship kinglier to me than to reign

King of the world without it.

*Edith.* Ask me not,  
Lest I should yield it, and the second  
curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou be  
only

King of the moment over England.

*Harold.* Edith,  
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true  
self

Than ere they crown'd me one, for I  
have lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro'  
mine oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not  
thou

Our living passion for a dead man's  
dream;

Stigand believed he knew not what  
he spake.

O God! I cannot help it, but at times  
They seem to me too narrow, all the  
faiths

Of this grown world of ours, whose  
baby eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I  
fear

This curse, and scorn it. But a little  
light!—

And on it falls the shadow of the  
priest;

Heaven yield us more! for better,  
Woden, all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim  
Walhalla,

Eternal war, than that the Saints at  
peace,

The Holiest of our Holiest One, should  
be

This William's fellow-tricksters;—  
better die

Than credit this, for death is death,  
or else

Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—  
thou art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear  
There might be more than brother in  
my kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

*Edith.* I dare not.

*Harold.* Scared by the church—  
'Love for a whole life long.'

When was that sung?

*Edith.* Here to the nightingales.

*Harold.* Their anthems of no  
church, how sweet they are!

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to  
cross

Their billings ere they nest.

*Edith.* They are but of spring,  
They fly the winter change—not so  
with us—

No wings to come and go.

*Harold.* But wing'd souls flying  
Beyond all change and in the eternal  
distance

To settle on the Truth.

*Edith.* They are not so true,  
They change their mates.

*Harold.* Do they? I did not know it.

*Edith.* They say thou art to wed the  
Lady Aldwyth.

*Harold.* They say, they say!

*Edith.* If this be politic,  
And well for thee and England—and  
for her—

Care not for me who love thee.

*Gurth (calling).* Harold, Harold!

*Harold.* The voice of Gurth! (*Enter*  
*Gurth.*) Good even, my good  
brother!

*Gurth.* Good even, gentle Edith.

*Edith.* Good even, Gurth.

*Gurth.* Ill news hath come! Our  
hapless brother, Tostig—

He, and the giant King of Norway,  
Harold

Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Ice-  
land, Orkney,

Are landed north of Humber, and in  
a field

So packt with carnage that the dykes  
and brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead,  
have overthrown

Morcar and Edwin.

*Harold.* Well then, we must fight.  
How blows the wind?

*Gurth.* Against Saint Valery  
And William.

*Harold.* Well then, we will to the  
North.

*Gurth.* Ay, but worse news: this  
William sent to Rome,  
Swearing thou swarest falsely by his  
Saints.

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand,  
His master, heard him, and have sent him back  
A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair  
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,  
Poitou, all Christendom is raised against thee.  
He hath cursed thee, and all those who fight for thee,  
And given thy realm of England to the bastard.

*Harold.* Ha! ha!

*Edith.* Oh, laugh not!—Strange and ghastly in the gloom  
And shadowing of this double thunder-cloud  
That lours on England—laughter!

*Harold.* No, not strange!  
This was old human laughter in old Rome  
Before a Pope was born, when that which reign'd  
Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering  
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.'—The Good Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

*Gurth.* They have taken York.

*Harold.* The Lord was God and came as man—the Pope  
Is man and comes as God.—York taken?

*Gurth.* Yea,  
Tostig hath taken York!

*Harold.* To York then, Edith,  
Hadst thou been braver, I had better braved  
All—but I love thee and thou me—and that  
Remains beyond all chances and all churches,  
And that thou knowest.

*Edith.* Ay, but take back thy ring.

It burns my hand—a curse to thee and me.

I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which he takes.*]

*Harold.* But I dare. God with thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

*Edith.* The King hath cursed him, if he marry me;  
The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or no!  
God help me! I know nothing—can but pray  
For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no help but prayer,  
A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,  
And touches Him that made it.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, and FORCES. *Enter HAROLD, the standard of the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding him.*

*Harold.* What! are thy people sullen from defeat?  
Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the Humber,  
No voice to greet it.

*Edwin.* Let not our great King Believe us sullen—only shamed to the quick  
Before the King—as having been so bruised

By Harold, King of Norway; but our help  
Is Harold, King of England. Pardon us, thou!  
Our silence is our reverence for the King!

*Harold.* Earl of the Mercians! if the truth be gall,  
Cram me not thou with honey, when our good hive  
Needs every sting to save it.

*Voices.* Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Why cry thy people on thy sister's name?

*Morcar.* She hath won upon our people thro' her beauty  
And pleasantness among them.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Aldwyth!



*Harold.* They shout as they would  
have her for a queen.

*Morcar.* She hath follow'd with our  
host, and suffer'd all.

*Harold.* What would ye, men?

*Voice.* Our old Northumbrian  
crown,  
And kings of our own choosing.

*Harold.* Your old crown  
Were little help without our Saxon  
carles

Against Hardrada.

*Voice.* Little! we are Danes,  
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our  
own field.

*Harold.* They have been plotting  
here! [*Aside.*]

*Voice.* He calls us little!

*Harold.* The kingdoms of this world  
began with little,  
A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a  
hand

Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou  
mine,'

When to the next, 'Thou also!' If the  
field

Cried out, 'I am mine own,' another  
hill,

Or fort, or city, took it, and the first  
Fell, and the next became an empire.

*Voice.* Yet  
Thou art but a West Saxon; *we* are  
Danes!

*Harold.* My mother is a Dane, and  
I am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books,  
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a  
score

All in one faggot, snap it over knee,  
Ye cannot.

*Voice.* Hear King Harold! he says  
true!

*Harold.* Would ye be Norsemen?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Or Norman?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Snap not the faggot-band  
then.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, but thou art not kingly,  
only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cowherd.

*Harold.* This old Wulfnoth

Would take me on his knees and tell  
me tales

Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great  
Who drove you Danes; and yet he  
held that Dane,

Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be  
all

One England; for this cowherd, like  
my father,

Who shook the Norman scoundrels off  
the throne,

Had in him kingly thoughts—a king of  
men,

Not made but born, like the great  
King of all,

A light among the oxen.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, and I love him now, for  
mine own father  
Was great, and cobbled.

*Voice.* Thou art Tostig's brother,  
Who wastes the land.

*Harold.* This brother comes to  
save

Your land from waste; I saved it  
once before,

For when your people banish'd Tos-  
tig hence,

And Edward would have sent a host  
against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bade  
the King,

Who doted on him, sanction your de-  
cree

Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of  
Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

*Voice.* King! thy brother,  
If one may dare to speak the truth,  
was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so; but the plots  
against him

Had madden'd tamer men.

*Morcar.* Thou art one of those  
Who brake into Lord Tostig's treas-  
ure-house

And slew two hundred of his follow-  
ing,

And now, when Tostig hath come back  
with power,

Are frightened back to Tostig.

*Old Thane.* Ugh! Plots and feuds!

# HAROLD

This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud with Alfgar,

And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

*Harold.* Old man, Harold Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our two houses

Be less than brothers.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth,

*Harold.* Again! Morcar! Edwin!

What do they mean?

*Edwin.* So the good King would deign to lend an ear

Not overscornful, we might chance —perchance—

To guess their meaning.

*Morcar.* Thine own meaning, Harold,

To make all England one, to close all feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule

All England beyond question, beyond quarrel.

*Harold.* Who sow'd this fancy here among the people?

*Morcar.* Who knows what sows itself among the people?

A goodly flower at times.

*Harold.* The Queen of Wales? Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in her To hate me; I have heard she hates me.

*Morcar.* No! For I can swear to that, but cannot swear

That these will follow thee against the Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, When will ye cease to plot against my house?

*Edwin.* The King can scarcely dream that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the West,

Should care to plot against him in the North.

*Morcar.* Who dares arraign us. King, of such a plot?

*Harold.* Ye heard one witness even now.

*Morcar.* The craven!

There is a faction risen again for Tostig,

Since Tostig came with Norway—fright, not love.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye, if I yield,

Follow against the Norseman?

*Morcar.* Surely, surely!

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye upon oath

Help us against the Norman?

*Morcar.* With good will; Yea, take the sacrament upon it,

King.

*Harold.* Where is thy sister?

*Morcar.* Somewhere hard at hand.

Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*]

*Aldwyth.* I doubt not but thou knowest

Why thou art summon'd.

*Aldwyth.* Why?—I stay with these, Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out alone,

And flay me all alive.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one Who did discrown thine husband, unqueen thee?

Didst thou not love thine husband?

*Aldwyth.* O! my lord, The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage king—

That was, my lord, a match of policy.

*Harold.* Was it? I knew him brave; he loved his land; he fain

Had made her great; his finger on her harp—

I heard him more than once—had in it Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills. Had I been his,

I had been all Welsh.

*Aldwyth.* O, ay!—all Welsh—and yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills—and women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love,  
the more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.

We never—O good Morcar, speak for us,

His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

*Harold.* Goodly news!

*Morcar.* Doubt it not thou! Since

Griffyth's head was sent

To Edward, she hath said it.

*Harold.* I had rather

She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth, Aldwyth,

Canst thou love me, thou knowing  
where I love?

*Aldwyth.* I can, my lord, for mine  
own sake, for thine,

For England, for thy poor white dove,  
who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then  
would find

Her nest within the cloister and be  
still.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one who  
cannot love again?

*Aldwyth.* Full hope have I that love  
will answer love.

*Harold.* Then in the name of the  
great God, so be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before  
the hosts,

That all may see.

[Aldred joins the hands of Harold and Aldwyth, and blesses them.

*Voices.* Harold, Harold and Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Set forth our golden  
Dragon, let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales!

Advance our Standard of the Warrior,  
Dark among gems and gold; and thou,

brave banner,

Blaze like a night of fatal stars on  
those

Who read their doom and die.

Where lie the Norsemen? on the Derwent? ay,

At Stamford-Bridge.

Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my  
friend—

Thou lingerest.—Gurth,—

Last night King Edward came to me  
in dreams—

The rosy face and long down-silvering  
beard—

He told me I should conquer.—

I am no woman to put faith in dreams.  
(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me  
in dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

*Voices.* Forward! Forward!

Harold and Holy Cross!

*Aldwyth.* The day is won!

## SCENE II

A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF  
STAMFORD-BRIDGE

HAROLD and his GUARD.

*Harold.* Who is it comes this way?  
Tostig? (*Enter TOSTIG with a*

*small force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

*Tostig.* I am foraging  
For Norway's army.

*Harold.* I could take and slay thee.  
Thou art in arms against us.

*Tostig.* Take and slay me,

For Edward loved me.

*Harold.* Edward bade me spare  
thee.

*Tostig.* I hate King Edward, for he  
join'd with thee

To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay  
me, I say,

Or I shall count thee fool.

*Harold.* Take thee, or free thee,  
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will  
have war;

No man would strike with Tostig,  
save for Norway.

Thou art nothing in thine England,  
save for Norway,

Who loves not thee, but war. What  
dost thou here,

Trampling thy mother's bosom into  
blood?

*Tostig.* She hath wean'd me from it  
with such bitterness.

I come for mine own earldom, my  
Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of  
our house.

*Harold.* Northumbria threw thee  
off, she will not have thee.

Thou hast misused her; and, O  
crowning crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the  
son of Orm,

Gamel, at thine own hearth.

*Tostig.* The slow, fat fool!  
He draw'd and prated so, I smote  
him suddenly;

I knew not what I did. He held with  
Morcar.—

I hate myself for all things that I do.  
*Harold.* And Morcar holds with us.

Come back with him.  
Know what thou dost; and we may  
find for thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banish-  
ment,

Some easier earldom.

*Tostig.* What for Norway then?  
He looks for land among us, he and  
his.

*Harold.* Seven feet of English  
land, or something more,  
Seeing he is a giant.

*Tostig.* That is noble!  
That sounds of Godwin.

*Harold.* Come thou back, and be  
Once more a son of Godwin.

*Tostig (turns away).* O brother,  
brother, O Harold—

*Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's  
shoulder).* Nay then, come  
thou back to us!

*Tostig (after a pause turning to  
him).* Never shall any man  
say that I, that Tostig

Conjured the mightier Harold from  
his North

To do the battle for me here in Eng-  
land,

Then left him for the meaner! thee!—  
Thou hast no passion for the house of

Godwin—

Thou hast but cared to make thyself  
a king—

Thou hast sold me for a cry.—

Thou gavest thy voice against me in  
the Council—

I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy  
thee.

Farewell for ever. [*Exit.*

*Harold.* On to Stamford-Bridge!

## SCENE III

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-  
BRIDGE. BANQUET

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOF-  
WIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, and other  
EARLS and THANES.

*Voices.* Hail! Harold! Aldwyth!  
hail, bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth (talking with Harold).*  
Answer them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would  
the wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the  
cups

Of victory, and our marriage and thy  
glory

Been drunk together! these poor  
hands but sew,

Spin, broider—would that they were  
man's to have held

The battle-axe by thee!

*Harold.* There was a moment  
When, being forced aloof from all  
my guard,

And striking at Hardrada and his  
madmen,

I had wish'd for any weapon.

*Aldwyth.* Why art thou sad?

*Harold.* I have lost the boy who  
play'd at ball with me,  
With whom I fought another fight  
than this

Of Stamford-Bridge.

*Aldwyth.* Ay! ay! thy victories  
Over our own poor Wales, when at  
thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

*Harold.* No—the childish fist  
That cannot strike again.

*Aldwyth.* Thou art too kindly.  
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen  
hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd  
their pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites  
upon a barn.

*Harold.* Is there so great a need to  
tell thee why?

*Aldwyth.* Yea, am I not thy wife?

*Voices.* Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!  
Bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth.* Answer them!

[To Harold.

*Harold (to all).* Earls and thanes!  
Full thanks for your fair greeting of  
my bride!

Earls, thanes, and all our country-  
men! the day,

Our day beside the Derwent, will not  
shine

Less than a star among the goldenest  
hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,  
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside

Who fought with Knut, or Knut who  
coming Dane

Died English. Every man about his  
King

Fought like a king; the King like his  
own man,

No better; one for all, and all for one,  
One soul! and therefore have we shat-  
ter'd back

The hugest wave from Norseland ever  
yet

Surged on us, and our battle-axes  
broken

The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his  
carrion croak

From the gray sea for ever. Many  
are gone—

Drink to the dead who died for us,  
the living

Who fought and would have died, but  
happier lived,

If happier be to live; they both have  
life

In the large mouth of England, till  
*her* voice

Die with the world. Hail—hail!

*Morcar.* May all invaders perish  
like Hardrada!

All traitors fail like Tostig!

[*All drink but Harold.*

*Aldwyth.* Thy cup's full!

*Harold.* I saw the hand of Tostig  
cover it.

Our dear, dead traitor-brother, Tostig,  
him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I  
been here,

Without too large self-lauding I must  
hold

The sequel had been other than his  
league

With Norway, and this battle. Peace  
be with him!

He was not of the worst. If there be  
those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing  
me—

For there be those, I fear, who prick'd  
the lion

To make him spring, that sight of  
Danish blood

Might serve an end not English—  
peace with them

Likewise, if *they* can be a peace with  
what

God gave us to divide us from the  
wolf!

*Aldwyth (aside to Harold).* Make  
not our Morcar sullen; it is  
not wise.

*Harold.* Hail to the living who  
fought, the dead who fell!

*Voices.* Hail, hail!

*First Thane.* How ran that answer  
which King Harold gave

To his dead namesake, when he ask'd  
for England?

*Leofwin.* 'Seven feet of English  
earth, or something more,

Seeing he is a giant!'

*First Thane.* Then for the bas-  
tard

Six feet and nothing more!

*Leofwin.* Ay, but belike  
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

*First Thane.* By Saint Edmund  
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to  
the man

Here by dead Norway without dream  
or dawn!

*Second Thane.* What, is he brag-  
ging still that he will come,

To thrust our Harold's throne from  
under him?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill  
crying  
To a mountain, 'Stand aside and room  
for me!'

*First Thane.* Let him come! let him  
come! Here 's to him, sink or  
swim! [*Drinks.*]

*Second Thane.* God sink him!

*First Thane.* Cannot hands which  
had the strength

To shove that stranded iceberg off  
our shores,

And send the shatter'd North again  
to sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Brun-  
nanburg

To Stamford-Bridge? a war-crash,  
and so hard,

So loud, that, by Saint Dunstan, old  
Saint Thor—

By God, we thought him dead—but  
our old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and  
woke and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons  
of those

Who made this Britain England, break  
the North—

Mark'd how the war-axe swung,  
Heard how the war-horn sang,  
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,  
Heard how the shield-wall rang,  
Iron on iron clang,  
Anvil on hammer bang—

*Second Thane.* Hammer on anvil,  
hammer on anvil. Old dog,  
Thou art drunk, old dog!

*First Thane.* Too drunk to fight  
with thee!

*Second Thane.* Fight thou with  
thine own double, not with me,  
Keep that for Norman William!

*First Thane.* Down with Wil-  
liam!

*Third Thane.* The washerwoman's  
brat!

*Fourth Thane.* The tanner's bas-  
tard!

*Fifth Thane.* The Falaise byblow!

*Enter a THANE, from Pevensey, spat-  
tered with mud.*

*Harold.* Ay, but what late guest,  
As haggard as a fast of forty days,  
And caked and plaster'd with a hun-  
dred mires,

Hath stumbled on our cups?

*Thane from Pevensey.* My lord the  
King!

William the Norman, for the wind  
had changed—

*Harold.* I felt it in the middle of  
that fierce fight

At Stamford-Bridge. William hath  
landed, ha?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Landed at  
Pevensey—I am from Peven-  
sey—

Hath wasted all the land at Peven-  
sey—

Hath harried mine own cattle—God  
confound him!

I have ridden night and day from  
Pevensey—

A thousand ships—a hundred thou-  
sand men—

Thousands of horses, like as many  
lions

Neighing and roaring as they leapt  
to land—

*Harold.* How oft in coming hast  
thou broken bread?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Some thrice  
or so.

*Harold.* Bring not thy hollowness  
On our full feast. Famine is fear, were  
it but

Of being starved. Sit down, sit down,  
and eat,

And, when again red-blooded, speak  
again.

(*Aside.*) The men that guarded Eng-  
land to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest.—No  
power mine

To hold their force together.—Many  
are fallen

At Stamford-Bridge—the people stu-  
pid-sure

Sleep like their swine—in South and  
North at once

I could not be.

(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,  
Edwin!

(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse  
of England! these are drown'd  
in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro'  
their wines!

Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth,  
must I leave—

Harsh is the news! hard is our honey-  
moon!

Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his  
attendants.*) Break the ban-  
quet up—Ye four!

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black  
news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when  
thou art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

## ACT V

SCENE I.—A TENT ON A MOUND, FROM  
WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE FIELD OF  
SENLAC.

HAROLD, *sitting; by him standing*  
HUGH MARGOT the MONK, GURTH,  
LEOFWIN.

*Harold.* Refer my cause, my crown  
to Rome!—The wolf  
Mudded the brook and predetermined  
all.

Monk,  
Thou hast said thy say, and had my  
constant 'No'  
For all but instant battle. I hear no  
more.

*Margot.* Hear me again—for the  
last time. Arise,  
Scatter thy people home, descend the  
hill,  
Lay hands of full allegiance in thy  
Lord's  
And crave his mercy, for the Holy  
Father

Hath given this realm of England to  
the Norman.

*Harold.* Then for the last time,  
monk, I ask again

When had the Lateran and the Holy  
Father

To do with England's choice of her  
own king?

*Margot.* Earl, the first Christian  
Cæsar drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the  
West.

He gave him all the kingdoms of the  
West.

*Harold.* So!—did he?—Earl—I  
have a mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and  
thy tongue.

Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger  
of William.

I am weary—go; make me not wroth  
with thee!

*Margot.* Mock-king, I am the mes-  
senger of God,

His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene,  
Tekel!

Is thy wrath hell, that I should spare  
to cry,

Yon Heaven is wroth with *thee*? Hear  
me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church  
that moves the world,

And all the Heavens and very God;  
they heard—

They know King Edward's promise  
and thine—thine.

*Harold.* Should they not know free  
England crowns herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to  
promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his  
own promise?

And for *my* part therein—Back to  
that juggler, [*Rising.*]

Tell him the Saints are nobler than  
he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the  
Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on Sen-  
lac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

*Margot.* Hear it thro' me.

The realm for which thou art for-  
sworn is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast  
is cursed,

The corpse thou whelme'st with thine  
 earth is cursed,  
 The soul who fighteth on thy side is  
 cursed,  
 The seed thou sowest in thy field is  
 cursed,  
 The steer wherewith thou plowest thy  
 field is cursed,  
 The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is  
 cursed,  
 And thou, usurper, liar—

*Harold.* Out, beast monk!

[*Lifting his hand to strike him.*

*Gurth stops the blow.*

I ever hated monks.

*Margot.* I am but a voice

Among you; murder, martyr me if  
 ye will—

*Harold.* Thanks, Gurth! The sim-  
 ple, silent, selfless man

Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To  
 Margot.*) Get thee gone!

He means the thing he says. See him  
 out safe!

*Leofwin.* He hath blown himself as  
 red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest  
 fool,

But if thou blurt thy curse among our  
 folk,

I know not—I may give that egg-bald  
 head

The tap that silences.

*Harold.* See him out safe.

[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*

*Gurth.* Thou hast lost thine even  
 temper, brother Harold!

*Harold.* Gurth, when I past by Wal-  
 tham, my foundation

For men who serve the neighbor, not  
 themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and,  
 when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had  
 lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that  
 which held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself  
 were bound

To that necessity which binds us  
 down;

Whether it bow'd at all but in their  
 fancy;

Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd  
 ruin

Or glory, who shall tell? but they were  
 sad,

And somewhat sadden'd me.

*Gurth.* Yet if a fear,

Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange  
 Saints

By whom thou sware'st should have  
 power to balk

Thy puissance in this fight with him  
 who made

And heard thee swear—brother—I  
 have not sworn—

If the King fall, may not the kingdom  
 fall?

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art King;  
 And if I win, I win, and thou art

King;

Draw thou to London, there make  
 strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day  
 to me.

*Leofwin (entering).* And waste the

land about thee as thou goest,

And be thy hand as winter on the  
 field,

To leave the foe no forage.

*Harold.* Noble Gurth!

Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—  
 The doom of God! How should the

people fight

When the King flies? And, Leofwin,  
 art thou mad?

How should the King of England  
 waste the fields

Of England, his own people?—No  
 glance yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the  
 heath?

*Leofwin.* No, but a shoal of wives  
 upon the heath,

And some one saw thy willy-nilly nun  
 Vying a tress against our golden fern.

*Harold.* Vying a tear with our cold  
 dews, a sigh

With these low-moaning heavens. Let  
 her be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife with-  
 out reproach,

Tho' we have pierced thro' all her  
 practices;

And that is well.



*Leofwin.* I saw her even now;  
She hath not left us.

*Harold.* Nought of Morcar then?

*Gurth.* Nor seen, nor heard; thine,  
William's, or his own  
As wind blows, or tide flows. Belike  
he watches  
If this war-storm in one of its rough  
rolls  
Wash up that old crown of Northum-  
berland.

*Harold.* I married her for Morcar  
—a sin against  
The truth of love. Evil for good, it  
seems,  
Is oft as childless of the good as  
evil  
For evil.

*Leofwin.* Good for good hath borne  
at times  
A bastard false as William.

*Harold.* Ay, if Wisdom  
Pair'd not with Good. But I am some-  
what worn,  
A snatch of sleep were like the peace  
of God.

*Gurth, Leofwin,* go once more about  
the hill—

What did the dead man call it—San-  
guelac,

The lake of blood;

*Leofwin.* A lake that dips in Wil-  
liam

As well as Harold.

*Harold.* Like enough. I have seen  
The trenches dug, the palisades up-  
rear'd

And wattled thick with ash and wil-  
low-wands,

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go  
round once more;

See all be sound and whole. No Nor-  
man horse

Can shatter England, standing shield  
by shield;

Tell that again to all.

*Gurth.* I will, good brother.

*Harold.* Our guardsman hath but  
toil'd his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some  
wine! (*One pours wine into a  
goblet which he hands to Har-  
old.*) Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to-  
day.

Our guardsmen have slept well, since  
we came in?

*Leofwin.* Ay, slept and snored.  
Your second-sighted man  
That scared the dying conscience of  
the king

Misheard their snores for groans.  
They are up again

And chanting that old song of Brun-  
anburg

Where England conquer'd.

*Harold.* That is well. The Norman,  
What is he doing?

*Leofwin.* Praying for Normandy;  
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of  
their bells.

*Harold.* And our old songs are  
prayers for England too!

But by all Saints—

*Leofwin.* Barring the Norman!  
*Harold.* Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing  
dooms-day dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the Nor-  
man moves—

[*Exeunt all but Harold.*  
No horse—thousands of horses—our  
shield wall—

Wall—break it not—break not—  
break— [Sleeps

*Vision of Edward.* Son Harold, I  
thy king, who came before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at  
Stamford-Bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I  
am at peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal  
day,

To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac  
Hill—

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Wulfnoth.* O brother,  
from my ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow  
seas—

No more, no more, dear brother,  
nevermore—

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Tostig.* O brother, most  
unbrotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in  
my life,  
I give my voice against thee from the  
grave—

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Norman Saints.* O hapless

Harold! King but for an hour!

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed  
bones,

We give our voice against thee out of  
heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow!  
the arrow!

*Harold (starting up, battle-axe in  
hand).* Away!

My battle-axe against your voices.  
Peace!

The King's last word—'the arrow!' I  
shall die—

I die for England then, who lived for  
England—

What nobler? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falsar world—

I have done no man wrong. Tostig,  
poor brother,

Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy  
hands

Save for thy wild and violent will that  
wrench'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I  
could do

No other than this way advise the  
king

Against the race of Godwin. Is it pos-  
sible

That mortal men should bear their  
earthly heats

Into yon bloodless world, and threaten  
us thence

Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou  
art revenged—

I left our England naked to the South  
To meet thee in the North. The

Norseman's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race  
of Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin. No—our wak-  
ing thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the  
pools

Of sullen slumber, and arise again

Disjointed; only dreams—where mine  
own self

Takes part against myself! Why? for  
a spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I  
sware

Falsely to him, the falsar Norman,  
over

His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by  
whom

I knew not that I sware,—not for my-  
self—

For England—yet not wholly—

*Enter* EDITH.

Edith, Edith,  
Get thou into thy cloister as the King  
Will'd it; be safe, the perjury-monger-  
ing Count

Hath made too good an use of Holy  
Church

To break her close! There the great  
God of truth

Fill all thine hours with peace!—A  
lying devil

Hath haunted me—mine oath—my  
wife—I fain

Had made my marriage not a lie; I  
could not.

Thou art my bride! and thou in after  
years

Praying perchance for this poor soul  
of mine

In cold, white cells beneath an icy  
moon—

This memory to thee!—and this to  
England,

My legacy of war against the Pope  
From child to child, from Pope to

Pope, from age to age,  
Till the sea wash her level with her

shores,  
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

*Enter* ALDWYTH.

*Aldwyth (to Edith).* Away from  
him!

*Edith.* I will.—I have not spoken  
to the king

One word; and one I must. Farewell!  
[*Going.*]

*Harold.* Not yet.  
Stay.

*Edith.* To what use?

*Harold.* The King commands thee,  
woman!

(To ALDWYTH.)

Have thy two brethren sent their  
forces in?

*Aldwyth.* Nay, I fear not.

*Harold.* Then there 's no force in  
thee!

Thou didst possess thyself of Ed-  
ward's ear

To part me from the woman that I  
loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce North-  
umbrians!

Thou hast been false to England and  
to me!—

As—in some sort—I have been false  
to thee.

Leave me. No more—Pardon on both  
sides—Go!

*Aldwyth.* Alas, my lord, I loved  
thee.

*Harold (bitterly).* With a love  
Passing thy love for Griffyth! where-  
fore now

Obeys my first and last command-  
ment. Go!

*Aldwyth.* O Harold! husband!  
Shall we meet again?

*Harold.* After the battle—after the  
battle. Go.

*Aldwyth.* I go. (*Aside.*) That I  
could stab her standing there!  
[*Exit Aldwyth.*]

*Edith.* Alas, my lord, she loved  
thee.

*Harold.* Never! never!

*Edith.* I saw it in her eyes!

*Harold.* I see it in thine.  
And not on thee—nor England—fall  
God's doom!

*Edith.* On thee? on me! And thou  
art England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing.  
England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

*Harold.* Edith,

The sign in heaven—the sudden blast  
at sea—

My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the  
dark dreams—

The Pope's anathema—the Holy  
Rood

That bow'd to me at Waltham—  
Edith, if

I, the last English King of England—  
*Edith.* No,

First of a line that coming from the  
people,

And chosen by the people—  
*Harold.* And fighting for

And dying for the people—  
*Edith.* Living! living!

*Harold.* Yea so, good cheer! thou  
art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

*Edith.* What matters how I look?  
Have we not broken Wales and Norse-  
land? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incar-  
nate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-  
arms

Than William.

*Harold.* Ay, my girl, no tricks in  
him—

No bastard he! when all was lost, he  
yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on  
the ground,

And swaying his two-handed sword  
about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in  
upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate  
This liar who made me liar. If Hate

can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-  
axe—

*Edith.* Waste not thy might before  
the battle!

*Harold.* No,

And thou must hence. Stigand will  
see thee safe,

And so—Farewell.  
[*He is going, but turns back.*]

The ring thou darest not wear,  
I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet  
my hand.

[Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.

Farewell!

[He is going, but turns back again.  
I am dead as Death this day to aught of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death!—to-day!  
Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day!  
A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One—this! [They embrace.  
Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.

Norman Cries (heard in the distance). Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!  
[Exeunt Harold and Gurth.

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not  
Spear into pruning-hook—the counter way—

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe.  
Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peter-boro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron—and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask me for it—

I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?

Stigand. Power now from Harold to command thee hence  
And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!

Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter, until I find

Which way the battle balance. I can see it

From where we stand; and, live or die, I would

I were among them!

CANONS from Waltham (singing without).

Salva patriam,  
Sancte Pater,  
Salva, Fili,  
Salva, Spiritus,  
Salva patriam,  
Sancta Mater.<sup>1</sup>

Edith. Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham,  
The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make their wall of shields  
Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

Stigand. The King of England stands between his banners.  
He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

Edith. —chosen by his people  
And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one  
Come as Goliath came of yore—he flings

His brand in air and catches it again,

He is chanting some old war-song.

Edith. And no David  
To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon on him,

Falls—and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of Harold!

CANONS (singing).

Hostis in Angliam  
Ruit prædator;

<sup>1</sup> The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

Illorum, Domine,  
 Scutum scindatur!  
 Hostis per Angliæ  
 Plagas bacchatur;  
 Casa crematur,  
 Pastor fugatur,  
 Grex trucidatur—

*Stigand.* Illos trucida, Domine.

*Edith.* Ay, good father.

CANONS (*singing*).

Illorum scelera  
 Poena sequatur!

*English Cries.* Harold and Holy  
 Cross! Out! out!

*Stigand.* Our javelins  
 Answer their arrows. All the Norman  
 foot

Are storming up the hill. The range  
 of knights

Sit, each a statue on his horse, and  
 wait.

*English Cries.* Harold and God Al-  
 mighty!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

CANONS (*singing*).

Eques cum pedite  
 Præpediatur!  
 Illorum in lacrymas  
 Cruor fundatur!  
 Pereant, pereant,  
 Anglia precatur.

*Stigand.* Look, daughter, look.

*Edith.* Nay, father, look for *me*!

*Stigand.* Our axes lighten with a  
 single flash

About the summit of the hill, and  
 heads

And arms are sliver'd off and splin-  
 ter'd by

Their lightning—and they fly—the  
 Norman flies.

*Edith.* Stigand, O father, have we  
 won the day?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, no—they  
 fall behind the horse—

Their horse are thronging to the barri-  
 cades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter

Floating above their helmets—ha! he  
 is down!

*Edith.* He down! Who down?

*Stigand.* The Norman Count is  
 down.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
 England!

*Stigand.* No, no, he hath risen again  
 —he bares his face—

Shouts something—he points onward  
 —all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming  
 up.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make his  
 battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice,  
 heavy

As thine own bolts that fall on crime-  
 ful heads

Charged with the weight of heaven  
 wherefrom they fall!

CANONS (*singing*).

Jacta tonitrua,  
 Deus bellator!  
 Surgas e tenebris,  
 Sis vindicator!  
 Fulmina, fulmina,  
 Deus vastator!

*Edith.* O God of battles, they are  
 three to one,

Make thou one man as three to roll  
 them down!

CANONS (*singing*).

Equus cum equite  
 Dejiciatur!  
 Acies, acies  
 Prona sternatur!  
 Illorum lanceas  
 Frange, Creator!

*Stigand.* Yea, yea, for how their  
 lances snap and shiver

Against the shifting blaze of Harold's  
 axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he  
 fells

The mortal copse of faces! There!  
 And there!

The horse and horsemen cannot meet  
 the shield,

The blow that brains the horseman  
cleaves the horse,  
The horse and horseman roll along  
the hill,  
They fly once more, they fly, the Nor-  
man flies!

*Equus cum equite  
Præcipitatur.*

*Edith.* O God, the God of truth  
hath heard my cry!  
Follow them, follow them, drive them  
to the sea!

*Illorum scelera  
Pœna sequatur!*

*Stigand.* Truth! no; a lie; a trick, a  
Norman trick!  
They turn on the pursuer, horse  
against foot,  
They murder all that follow.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Hot-headed fools—to  
burst the wall of shields!  
They have broken the commandment  
of the king!

*Edith.* His oath was broken—O  
holy Norman Saints,  
Ye that are now of heaven, and see  
beyond  
Your Norman shrines, pardon it, par-  
don it,  
That he forswore himself for all he  
loved,  
Me, me and all! Look out upon the  
battle!

*Stigand.* They thunder again upon  
the barricades.  
My sight is eagle, but the strife so  
thick—

This is the hottest of it; hold, ash!  
hold, willow!

*English Cries.* Out, out!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou!

*Stigand.* Ha! Gurth had leapt upon  
him  
And slain him; he hath fallen.

*Edith.* And I am heard.  
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen,  
fallen!

*Stigand.* No, no, his horse—he  
mounts another—wields

His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and  
Gurth,  
Our noble Gurth, is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* And Leofwin is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my  
strong prayer  
Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I  
love

The husband of another!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* I do not hear our English  
war-cry.

*Stigand.* No.

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—  
is he safe?

*Stigand.* He stands between the  
banners with the dead  
So piled about him he can hardly  
move.

*Edith (takes up the war-cry).* Out!  
out!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou!

*Edith (cries out).* Harold and Holy  
Cross!

*Norman Cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman sends his  
arrows up to heaven,  
They fall on those within the pali-  
sade!

*Edith.* Look out upon the hill—is  
Harold there?

*Stigand.* Sanguelac—Sanguelac—  
the arrow—the arrow!—away!

SCENE II

FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, art thou here? O  
Harold, Harold—  
Our Harold—we shall never see him  
more.

*Edith.* For there was more than  
sister in my kiss,  
And so the Saints were wroth. I can  
not love them,

For they are Norman Saints—and yet  
I should—

They are so much holier than their  
harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game  
against the King!

*Aldwyth.* The King is slain, the  
kingdom overthrown!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* How no matter, Harold  
slain?—

I cannot find his body. O, help me  
thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against  
thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* Not help me, nor forgive  
me?

*Edith.* So thou saidest.

*Aldwyth.* I say it now, forgive me!

*Edith.* Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in  
secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it.  
Ha!

What art *thou* doing here among the  
dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies  
naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of  
their rings!

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, Edith, I have  
lost both crown

And husband.

*Edith.* So have I.

*Aldwyth.* I tell thee, girl,

I am seeking my dead Harold.

*Edith.* And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with  
a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig  
help't;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and  
laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

*Aldwyth.* Edith, Edith—

*Edith.* What was he like, this hus-  
band? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew  
him not.

He lies not here; not close beside the  
standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts  
of England.

Go further hence and find him.

*Aldwyth.* She is crazed!

*Edith.* That doth not matter either.

Lower the light.

He must be here.

*Enter two CANONS, OSGOD and ATHEL-  
RIC, with torches. They turn over the  
dead bodies and examine them as they  
pass.*

*Osgod.* I think that this is Thurkill.

*Athelric.* More likely Godric.

*Osgod.* I am sure this body

Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

*Athelric.* So it is!

No, no,—brave Gurth, one gash from  
brow to knee!

*Osgod.* And here is Leofwin.

*Edith.* And here is *he*!

*Aldwyth.* Harold? O, no—nay, if it  
were—my God,

They have so maim'd and murder'd  
all his face

There is no man can swear to him!

*Edith.* But one woman!

Look you, we never mean to part  
again.

I have found him, I am happy.

Was there not some one ask'd me for  
forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife  
Of this dead King, who never bore re-  
venge.

*Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM  
MALET.*

*William.* Who be these women?

And what body is this?

*Edith.* Harold, thy better!

*William.* Ay, and what art thou?

*Edith.* His wife!

*Malet.* Not true, my girl, here is  
the Queen!

[*Pointing out* Aldwyth.

*William* (to Aldwyth). Wast thou  
his Queen?

*Aldwyth.* I was the Queen of Wales.

*William.* Why, then of England.

Madam, fear us not.

(To Malet.) Knowest thou this other?

*Malet.* When I visited England,  
Some held she was his wife in secret  
—some—

Well—some believed she was his  
paramour.

*Edith.* Norman, thou liest! liars all  
of you,  
Your Saints and all! I am his wife!  
and she—

For look, our marriage ring!  
[*She draws it off the finger*  
of Harold.

I lost it somehow—  
I lost it, playing with it when I was  
wild.

That bred the doubt! but I am wiser  
now—

I am too wise—Will none among you  
all

Bear me true witness—only for this  
once—

That I have found it here again?  
[*She puts it on.*  
And thou,

Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.  
[*Falls on the body and dies.*

*William.* Death!—and enough of  
death for this one day,  
The day of Saint Calixtus, and the  
day,

My day when I was born.

*Malet.* And this dead King's,  
Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought  
and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yes-  
ter-even

I held it with him in his English halls,  
His day, with all his roof-tree ringing  
'Harold.'

Before he fell into the snare of  
Guy;

When all men counted Harold would  
be King,

And Harold was most happy.

*William.* Thou art half English.  
Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to  
God

Here on the hill of battle; let our  
high altar

Stand where their standard fell—  
where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see  
them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead  
man, Malet!

*Malet.* Faster than ivy! Must I  
hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

*William.* Leave them. Let them be!  
Bury him and his paramour together.  
He that was false in oath to me, it  
seems

Was false to his own wife. We will  
not give him

A Christian burial; yet he was a war-  
rior,

And wise, yea truthful, till that  
blighted vow

Which God avenged to-day.  
Wrap them together in a purple cloak,  
And lay them both upon the waste  
seashore

At Hastings, there to guard the land  
for which

He did forswear himself—a warrior—  
ay,  
And but that Holy Peter fought for  
us,

And that the false Northumbrian held  
aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which  
the Saints

Sharpen'd and sent against him—who  
can tell?—

Three horses had I slain beneath me;  
twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I  
knew battle,

And that was from my boyhood, never  
yet—

No, by the splendor of God—have I  
fought men

Like Harold and his brethren, and his  
guard

Of English. Every man about his  
king

Fell where he stood. They loved him;  
and, pray God

My Normans may but move as true  
with me

To the door of death! Of one self-  
stock at first,



Make them again one people—Nor-  
man, English,  
And English, Norman; we should  
have a hand  
To grasp the world with, and a foot  
to stamp it—  
Flat. Praise the Saints! It is over. No  
more blood!

I am King of England, so they thwart  
me not,  
And I will rule according to their  
laws.  
(*To Aldwyth.*) Madam, we will en-  
treat thee with all honor.  
*Aldwyth.* My punishment is more  
than I can bear.

# BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE,—To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.

Ever yours,  
TENNYSON

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II, (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).

THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*

GILBERT FOLIO, *Bishop of London.*

ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*

*Bishop of Hereford.*

HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*

JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*

URY  
HAM } *friends of Becket.*

WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood.*

KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.

GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*

GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge.*

SIR REGINALD FITZURSE

SIR RICHARD DE BRITO

SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY

SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE

DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.

LORD LEICESTER.

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA.

TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.

JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France).*

ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.

MARGERY.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

## BECKET

### PROLOGUE

A CASTLE IN NORMANDY. INTERIOR OF  
THE HALL. ROOFS OF A CITY SEEN  
THRO' WINDOWS

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

*Henry.* So then our good Arch-  
bishop Theobald  
Lies dying.

*Becket.* I am grieved to know as  
much

*Henry.* But we must have a  
mightier man than he  
For his successor.

*Becket.* Have you thought of one?

*Henry.* A cleric lately poison'd his  
own mother,  
And being brought before the courts  
of the Church,  
They but degraded him. I hope they  
whipt him.

I would have hang'd him.

*Becket.* It is your move.

*Henry.* Well—there. [*Moves.*  
The Church in the pell-mell of  
Stephen's time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost  
clutch'd the crown;

But by the royal customs of our realm  
The Church should hold her baronies  
of me

Like other lords amenable to law.

I 'll have them written down and  
made the law.

*Becket.* My liege, I move my  
bishop.

*Henry.* And if I live,  
No man without my leave shall ex-  
communicate

My tenants or my household.

*Becket.* Look to your king.

*Henry.* No man without my leave  
shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me—I pray  
your pardon.

*Becket.* Well—will you move?

*Henry.* There. [*Moves.*

*Becket.* Check—you move so  
wildly.

*Henry.* There then! [*Moves.*

*Becket.* Why—there then, for you  
see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a stand-  
still. You are beaten.

*Henry* (*kicks over the board*).

Why, there then—down go  
bishop and king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my  
fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten  
thee,

But that was vagabond.

*Becket.* Where, my liege? With  
Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or an-  
other?

*Henry.* My Rosamund is no Lais,  
Thomas Becket;

And yet she plagues me too—no fault  
in her—

But that I fear the Queen would have  
her life.

*Becket.* Put her away, put her  
away, my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom  
thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore  
should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford  
more

Than that of other paramours of  
thine?

*Henry.* How dost thou know I am  
not wedded to her?

*Becket.* How should I know?

*Henry.* That is my secret, Thomas.

# BECKET

*Becket.* State secrets should be  
patent to the statesman  
Who serves and loves his king, and  
whom the king  
Loves not as statesman, but true lover  
and friend.

*Henry.* Come, come, thou art but  
deacon, not yet bishop,  
No, nor archbishop, nor my confes-  
sor, yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I  
should find  
An easy father confessor in thee.

*Becket.* Saint Denis, that thou  
shouldst not. I should beat  
Thy kingship as my bishop hath  
beaten it.

*Henry.* Hell take thy bishop then,  
and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know  
thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at  
feasts,

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,  
A dish-designer, and most amorous  
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon  
wine.

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou  
flatter it?

*Becket.* That palate is insane which  
cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine  
from old.

*Henry.* Well, who loves wine loves  
woman.

*Becket.* So I do.  
Men are God's trees, and women are  
God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to  
my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the  
flowers

Are all the fairer.

*Henry.* And thy thoughts, thy fan-  
cies?

*Becket.* Good dogs, my liege, well  
train'd, and easily call'd  
Off from the game.

*Henry.* Save for some once or  
twice,

When they ran down the game and  
worried it.

*Becket.* No, my liege, no!—not  
once—in God's name, no!

*Henry.* Nay, then, I take thee at  
thy word—believe thee  
The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's  
hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-  
wife,

Not Eleanor—she whom I love in-  
deed

As a woman should be loved—Why  
dost thou smile

So dolorously?

*Becket.* My good liege, if a man  
Wastes himself among women, how  
should he love

A woman as a woman should be  
loved?

*Henry.* How shouldst thou know  
that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in  
England

When I am out in Normandy or An-  
jou.

*Becket.* My lord, I am your sub-  
ject, not your—

*Henry.* Pander.  
God's eyes! I know all that—not my  
purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life—her  
life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-  
fire.

I have built a secret bower in Eng-  
land, Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

*Becket.* And where, my liege?  
*Henry (whispers).* Thine ear.

*Becket.* That 's lone enough.

*Henry (laying paper on table).*  
This chart here mark'd '*Her  
Bower,*'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a cir-  
cling wood,

A hundred pathways running every-  
way,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after  
that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in  
maze,

And then another wood, and in the  
midst

A garden and my Rosamund. Look,  
this line—

The rest you see is color'd green—  
but this

Draws thro' the chart to her.

*Becket.* This blood-red line?

*Henry.* Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

*Becket.* And where is she? There in her English nest?

*Henry.* Would God she were!—no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

*Becket.* My liege, I pray thee let me hence; a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons—

*Henry.* Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

*Becket.* Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

*Henry.* Whatever come between us?

*Becket.* What should come Between us, Henry?

*Henry.* Nay—I know not, Thomas.

*Becket.* What need then? Well—whatever come between us.

[*Going.*]

*Henry.* A moment! thou didst help me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,

For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son Of Holy Church—no croucher to the

Gregories That tread the kings their children under-heel—

Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while

This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,

Will need my help—be facile to my hands.

Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,

An interdict on England—I will have My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.

I'll have it done—and now.

*Becket.* Surely too young Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,

The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

*Henry.* I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

*Becket.* The next Canterbury.

*Henry.* And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

*Becket.* Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

*Henry* (*lays his hand on Becket's shoulder*). Here!

*Becket.* Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

*Henry.* But the arm within Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

*Becket.* A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

*Henry.* I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—

A man of this world and the next to boot.

*Becket.* There's Gilbert Foliot.

*Henry.* He! too thin, too thin. Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;

Your Foliot fests and fawns too much for me.

*Becket.* Roger of York.

# BECKET

*Henry.* Roger is Roger of York;  
King, Church, and State to him but  
foils wherein  
To set that precious jewel, Roger of  
York.

No.

*Becket.* Henry of Winchester?

*Henry.* Him who crown'd Stephen—  
King Stephen's brother! No; too  
royal for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

*Becket.* Sire, the business  
Of thy whole kingdom waits me; let  
me go.

*Henry.* Answer me first.

*Becket.* Then for thy barren jest  
Take thou mine answer in bare com-  
mon-place—

*Nolo episcopari.*

*Henry.* Ay, but *Nolo*  
*Archiepiscopari*, my good friend,  
Is quite another matter.

*Becket.* A more awful one.  
Make me archbishop! Why, my liege,  
I know

Some three or four poor priests a  
thousand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me*  
archbishop!

God's favor and king's favor might so  
clash

That thou and I— That were a jest  
indeed!

*Henry.* Thou angerest me, man; I  
do not jest.

*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD  
FITZURSE.*

ELEANOR (*singing*).

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done—

*Henry (to Becket, who is going).*  
Thou shalt not go. I have not  
ended with thee.

*Eleanor (seeing chart on table).*  
This chart with the red line! her  
bower! whose bower?

*Henry.* The chart is not mine, but  
Becket's; take it, Thomas.

*Eleanor.* Becket! O,—ay—and  
these chessmen on the floor—the

king's crown broken! Becket hath  
beaten thee again—and thou hast  
kicked down the board. I know thee  
of old.

*Henry.* True enough, my mind was  
set upon other matters.

*Eleanor.* What matters? State mat-  
ters? love matters?

*Henry.* My love for thee, and thine  
for me.

ELEANOR.

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine  
lasts longer. I would I were in Aqi-  
taine again—your North chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,  
And never a flower at the close;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first  
—but unsymmetrically, preposter-  
ously, illogically, out of passion, with-  
out art—like a song of the people.  
Will you have it? The last Parthian  
shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's  
left breast, and all left-handedness  
and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the  
rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after  
my fancies, for I am a Troubadour,  
you know, and won the violet at Tou-  
louse; but my voice is harsh here, not  
in tune, a nightingale out of season;  
for marriage, rose or no rose, has  
killed the golden violet.

*Becket.* Madam, you do ill to scorn  
wedded love.

*Eleanor.* So I do. Louis of France  
loved me, and I dreamed that I loved  
Louis of France: and I loved Henry  
of England, and Henry of England  
dreamed that he loved me; but the  
marriage-garland withers even with

the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

*Henry.* Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

*Eleanor.* Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*]

*Henry* (*puts it on*). On this left breast before so hard a heart, To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

*Eleanor.* Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme—

*Henry.* That the heart were lost in the rhyme, and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facilities?

*Eleanor.* The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

*Henry.* There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

*Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.*

*Herbert.* My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

*Henry.* Peace to his soul!

*Herbert.* I left him with peace on his face,—that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

*Henry.* Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

*Becket.* My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

*Henry.* Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[*Leaps over the table, and exit.*]

*Becket.* He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church—

But have I done it? He commends me now From out his grave to this archbishopric.

*Herbert.* A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

*Becket.* His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Becket.*]

*Eleanor.* Fitzurse, that chart with the red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

*Fitzurse.* Rosamund's?

*Eleanor.* Ay—there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

*Fitzurse.* To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him!

*Eleanor.* Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

*Fitzurse.* Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royalling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

*Eleanor.* For the which I honor him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great and sound policy that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

## BECKET

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

*Eleanor.* Pride of the plebeian!

*Fitzurse.* And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

*Eleanor.* True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

*Fitzurse.* Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

*Eleanor.* Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

*Fitzurse.* Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

*Eleanor.* No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

*Eleanor.* I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

*Eleanor.* Us!

*Fitzurse.* Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

*Eleanor.* Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me.

*Fitzurse.* I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

*Eleanor.* Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

## ACT I

### SCENE I.—BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON

*Chamber barely furnished. BECKET unrobing. HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.*

*Servant.* Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

*Becket.* Friend, am I so much better than thyself

That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out  
With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.



Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit* Servant.]

Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

*Herbert.* Was not the people's blessing as we passed

Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

*Becket.* The people know their Church a tower of strength,

A bulwark against Throne and Bar-  
onage.

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

*Herbert.* Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

*Becket.* No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's

Together more than mortal man can bear.

*Herbert.* Not heavier than thine armor at Toulouse?

*Becket.* O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship

I more than once have gone against the Church.

*Herbert.* To please the King?

*Becket.* Ay, and the King of kings,

Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just

The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle—  
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

*Herbert.* Ay,

For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

*Becket.* Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,

Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven

Into her bosom.

*Herbert.* Ay, the fire, the light,  
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd

Into thy making.

*Becket.* And when I was a child,  
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,

Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.  
Dream,

Or prophecy, that?

*Herbert.* Well, dream and prophecy both.

*Becket.* And when I was of Theobald's household, once—

The good old man would sometimes have his jest—

He took his mitre off, and set it on me,

And said, 'My young archbishop—thou wouldst make

A stately archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?

*Herbert.* Both, Thomas, both.

*Becket.* Am I the man? That rang

Within my head last night, and when I slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,

And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,

And secular splendors, and a favorer Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder

Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.

Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,

Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,

And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me

For this thy great archbishopric, believing

That I should go against the Church with him,

And I shall go against him with the Church,

And I have said no word of this to him.

Am I the man? And the Lord answer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew  
toward me,  
And smote me down upon the minster  
floor.

I fell.

*Herbert.* God make not thee, but  
thy foes, fall!

*Becket.* I fell. Why fall? Why did  
He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off—to please the King  
once more?

Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to  
the King—

My truest and mine utmost for the  
Church?

*Herbert.* Thou canst not fall that  
way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost for  
the Church,

Save from the throne of thine arch-  
bishopric?

And how been made archbishop hadst  
thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the  
Church,

Against the King?'

*Becket.* But dost thou think the  
King

Forced mine election?

*Herbert.* I do think the King  
Was potent in the election, and why

not?

Why should not Heaven have so in-  
spired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man—be  
thou

A mightier Anselm.

*Becket.* I do believe thee, then. I  
am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd—on such a  
sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see  
The rift that runs between me and  
the King.

I served our Theobald well when I  
was with him;

I served King Henry well as Chan-  
cellor;

I am his no more, and I must serve  
the Church.

This Canterbury is only less than  
Rome,

And all my doubts I fling from me  
like dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to  
the wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior,  
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,

And all the heap'd experiences of life,  
I cast upon the side of Canterbury—

Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits  
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons,

thro'

The random gifts of careless kings,  
have graspt

Her livings, her advowsons, granges,  
farms,

And goodly acres—we will make her  
whole;

Not one rood lost. And for these  
Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs—they  
are Royal,

Not of the Church—and let them be  
anathema.

And all that speak for them anathema.

*Herbert.* Thomas, thou art moved  
too much.

*Becket.* O Herbert, here

I gash myself asunder from the King,  
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine

own, a grief

To show the scar for ever—his, a hate  
Not ever to be heal'd.

*Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying  
from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.  
Drops her veil.*

*Becket.* Rosamund de Clifford!

*Rosamund.* Save me, father, hide  
me—they follow me—and I must not  
be known.

*Becket.* Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert  
by side door.*]

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* The archbishop!

*Becket.* Ay! what wouldst  
Reginald?

*Fitzurse.* Why—why, my lord  
follow'd—follow'd on—

*Becket.* And then what follows?  
Let me follow thee.

*Fitzurse.* It much imports me I  
should know her name.

*Becket.* What her?

*Fitzurse.* The woman that I fol-  
low'd hither.

*Becket.* Perhaps it may import her  
all as much  
Not to be known.

*Fitzurse.* And what care I for  
that?

Come, come, my lord archbishop; I  
saw that door

Close even now upon the woman.

*Becket.* Well?

*Fitzurse* (*making for the door*).

Nay, let me pass, my lord, for  
I must know.

*Becket.* Back, man!

*Fitzurse.* Then tell me who and  
what she is.

*Becket.* Art thou so sure thou fol-  
lowedest anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for  
thine eyes

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

*Fitzurse* (*making to the door*). I  
must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishopric.

*Becket.* Back, man, I tell thee!  
What!

Shall I forget my new archbishopric  
And smite thee with my crozier on  
the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than  
thou.

*Fitzurse.* It well befits thy new  
archbishopric

To take the vagabond woman of the  
street

Into thine arms!

*Becket.* O drunken ribaldry!

Out, beast! out, bear!

*Fitzurse.* I shall remember this.

*Becket.* Do, and begone!

[*Exit Fitzurse.*

[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*

Tracy, what dost thou here?

*De Tracy.* My lord, I follow'd Reg-  
inald Fitzurse.

t. Follow him out!

*De Tracy.* I shall remember this  
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*

*Becket.* Do. These be those baron-  
brutes

That havock'd all the land in  
Stephen's day.

Rosamund de Clifford!

*Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.*

*Rosamund.* Here am I.

*Becket.* Why here?  
We gave thee to the charge of John of  
Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-  
morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself  
from sight?

*Rosamund.* Poor bird of passage!  
so I was; but, father,

They say that you are wise in winged  
things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar  
the bird

From following the fled summer—a  
chink—he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city a  
breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded  
me

Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and  
the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and  
I thought

'Lo! I must out or die.'

*Becket.* Or out *and* die.  
And what hast thou to do with this  
Fitzurse?

*Rosamund.* Nothing. He sued my  
hand. I shook at him.

He found me once alone. Nay—nay  
—I cannot

Tell you. My father drove him and  
his friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our  
castle.

I was but fourteen and an April then.  
I heard him swear revenge.

*Becket.* Why will you court it  
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?  
Make it so hard to save a moth from  
the fire?

*Rosamund.* I have saved many of  
'em. You catch 'em, so,  
Softly, and fling them out to the free  
air.

They burn themselves *within-door*.

*Becket.* Our good John  
Must speed you to your bower at  
once. The child

Is there already.

*Rosamund.* Yes—the child—the  
child—

O, rare, a whole long day of open  
field!

*Becket.* Ay, but you go disguised.

*Rosamund.* O, rare again!  
We'll baffle them, I warrant. What  
shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

*Becket.* No.

*Rosamund.* What, not good enough  
Even to play at nun?

*Becket.* Dan John with a nun,  
That Map and these new railers at the  
Church

May plaister his clean name with  
scurrilous rhymes!

No!

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding  
up

That fatal star, thy beauty, from the  
squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good-  
night! good-night!

*Rosamund.* Father, I am so tender  
to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

*Becket.* Wedded?

*Rosamund.* Father!

*Becket.* Well, well! I ask no more.  
Heaven bless thee! hence!

*Rosamund.* O holy father, when  
thou seest him next,  
Commend me to thy friend.

*Becket.* What friend?

*Rosamund.* The King.

*Becket.* Herbert, take out a score  
of armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her  
cage;

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow  
thee,

Make him thy prisoner. I am Chan-  
cellor yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*  
Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King!—O thou Great  
Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend, the King  
of England—

We long have wrought together, thou  
and I—

Now must I send thee as a common  
friend

To tell the King, my friend, I am  
against him.

We are friends no more; he will say  
that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dis-  
solved,

Not yet the love. Can I be under him  
As Chancellor? as Archbishop over  
him?

Go therefore like a friend slighted by  
one

That hath climb'd up to nobler com-  
pany.

Not slighted—all but moan'd for.  
Thou must go.

I have not dishonor'd thee—I trust I  
have not—

Not mangled justice. May the hand  
that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee  
As mine hath been! O, my dear friend,

the King!

O brother!—I may come to martyr-  
dom.

I am martyr in myself already.—Her-  
bert!

*Herbert (re-entering).* My lord, the  
town is quiet, and the moon

Divides the whole long street with  
light and shade.

No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have  
seen her home.

*Becket.* The hog hath tumbled him-  
self into some corner,  
Some ditch, to snore away his drunk-  
enness

Into the sober headache,—Nature's  
moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be  
sent

Back to the King to-morrow.

*Herbert.* Must that be?

The King may rend the bearer limb  
from limb.

Think on it again.

*Becket.* Against the moral excess  
No physical ache, but failure it may  
be

Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury  
Hath often laid a cold hand on my  
heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even  
now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier  
As Foliot swears it.—John, and out  
of breath!

*Enter* JOHN OF SALISBURY.

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, thou  
wast not happy taking charge  
Of this wild Rosamund to please the  
King,

Nor am I happy having charge of  
her—

The included Danaë has escaped again  
Her tower and her Acrisius—where to  
seek?

I have been about the city.

*Becket.* Thou wilt find her  
Back in her lodging. Go with her—at  
once—

To-night—my men will guard you to  
the gates,

Be sweet to her, she has many ene-  
mies.

Send the Great Seal by daybreak.  
Both, good-night!

## SCENE II

STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO  
THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS *and* BECKET'S  
RETAINERS *fighting. Enter* ELEANOR  
*and* BECKET *from opposite streets.*

*Eleanor.* Peace, fools!

*Becket.* Peace, friends! what idle  
brawl is this?

*Retainer of Becket.* They said—  
her Grace's people—thou wast  
d—

Liar! I shame to quote 'em—caught,  
my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell  
requite 'em!

*Retainer of Eleanor.* My liege, the  
Lord Fitzurse reported this  
In passing to the Castle even now.

*Retainer of Becket.* And then they  
mock'd us and we fell upon  
'em,

For we would live and die for thee,  
my lord,

However kings and queens may frown  
on thee.

*Becket to his Retainers.* Go, go—  
no more of this!

*Eleanor to her Retainers.* Away!—  
(*Exeunt Retainers.*) Fitz-  
urse—

*Becket.* Nay, let him be.

*Eleanor.* No, no, my lord arch-  
bishop,

'T is known you are midwinter to all  
women,

But often in your chancellorship you  
served

The follies of the King.

*Becket.* No, not these follies!

*Eleanor.* My lord, Fitzurse beheld  
her in your lodging.

*Becket.* Whom?

*Eleanor.* Well—you know—the  
minion, Rosamund.

*Becket.* He had good eyes!

*Eleanor.* Then hidden in the street  
He watch'd her pass with John of  
Salisbury,

And heard her cry, 'Where is this  
bower of mine?'

*Becket.* Good ears too!

*Eleanor.* You are going to the  
Castle,

Will you subscribe the customs?

*Becket.* I leave that,  
Knowing how much you reverence  
Holy Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

*Eleanor.* I and mine—  
And many a baron holds along with  
me—

Are not so much at feud with Holy  
Church

But we might take your side against  
the customs—

So that you grant me one slight favor.

*Becket.* What?

*Eleanor.* A sight of that same chart  
which Henry gave you  
With the red line—her bower.

*Becket.* And to what end?

*Eleanor.* That Church must scorn  
herself whose fearful priest  
Sits winking at the license of a king,  
Altho' we grant when kings are dan-  
gerous

The Church must play into the hands  
of kings;

Look! I would move this wanton  
from his sight

And take the Church's danger on my-  
self.

*Becket.* For which she should be  
duly grateful.

*Eleanor.* True!

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself  
should see

That kings are faithful to their mar-  
riage vow.

*Becket.* Ay, madam, and queens  
also.

*Eleanor.* And queens also!  
What is your drift?

*Becket.* My drift is to the Castle,  
Where I shall meet the barons and  
my King. *[Exit.]*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE  
MORVILLE (*passing*).

*Eleanor.* To the Castle?

*De Broc.* Ay!

*Eleanor.* Stir up the King, the  
lords!  
Set all on fire against him!

*De Brito.* Ay, good madam!  
*[Exeunt.]*

*Eleanor.* Fool! I will make thee  
hateful to thy King.  
Churl! I will have thee frighted into  
France,  
And I shall live to trample on thy  
grave.

## SCENE III

## THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE

*On one side of the stage the doors of  
an inner Council-chamber, half-  
open. At the bottom, the great  
doors of the Hall. ROGER ARCH-  
BISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF  
LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER,  
BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE  
HASTINGS (Grand Prior of Tem-  
plars), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (the  
Pope's Almoner), and others. DE  
BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MOR-  
VILLE, DE TRACY, and other BARONS  
assembled—a table before them.  
JOHN OF OXFORD, President of the  
Council.*

*Enter BECKET and HERBERT OF  
BOSHAM.*

*Becket.* Where is the King?

*Roger of York.* Gone hawking on  
the Nene,

His heart so gall'd with thine ingrati-  
tude,

He will not see thy face till thou hast  
sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of  
the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal  
madden'd him;

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes  
away.

Take heed lest he destroy thee ut-  
terly.

*Becket.* Then shalt thou step into  
my place and sign.

*Roger of York.* Didst thou not  
promise Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of  
the realm?

*Becket.* Saving the honor of my  
order—ay.

Customs, traditions,—clouds that  
come and go;

The customs of the Church are  
Peter's rock.

*Roger of York.* Saving thine order!  
But King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he  
 would grant thee  
 The crown itself. Saving thine order,  
 Thomas,  
 Is black and white at once, and comes  
 to nought.  
 O bolster'd up with stubbornness and  
 pride,  
 Wilt thou destroy the Church in fight-  
 ing for it,  
 And bring us all to shame?

*Becket.* Roger of York,  
 When I and thou were youths in  
 Theobald's house,  
 Twice did thy malice and thy calum-  
 nies  
 Exile me from the face of Theobald.  
 Now I am Canterbury, and thou art  
 York.

*Roger of York.* And is not York the  
 peer of Canterbury?  
 Did not Great Gregory bid Saint Aus-  
 tin here  
 Found two archbishoprics, London  
 and York?

*Becket.* What came of that? The  
 first archbishop fled,  
 And York lay barren for a hundred  
 years.  
 Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim  
 the pall  
 For London too.

*Foliot.* And with good reason too,  
 For London had a temple and a priest  
 When Canterbury hardly bore a  
 name.

*Becket.* The pagan temple of a pa-  
 gan Rome!  
 The heathen priesthood of a heathen  
 creed!  
 Thou goest beyond thyself in petu-  
 lancy!  
 Who made thee London? Who, but  
 Canterbury?

*John of Oxford.* Peace, peace, my  
 lords! these customs are no  
 longer  
 As Canterbury calls them, wandering  
 clouds,  
 But by the King's command are writ-  
 ten down,  
 And by the King's command I, John  
 of Oxford,

The President of this Council, read  
 them.

*Becket.*

Read!

*John of Oxford (reads).* 'All causes  
 of advowsons and presentations,  
 whether between laymen or clerics,  
 shall be tried in the King's court.'

*Becket.* But that I cannot sign; for  
 that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-  
 seat,

And on a matter wholly spiritual.

*John of Oxford.* 'If any cleric be  
 accused of felony, the Church shall  
 not protect him; but he shall answer  
 to the summons of the King's court to  
 be tried therein.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign.

Is not the Church the visible Lord on  
 earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord  
 be bound

Behind the back like laymen-crim-  
 inals?

The Lord be judged again by Pilate?  
 No!

*John of Oxford.* 'When a bishopric  
 falls vacant, the King, till another be  
 appointed, shall receive the revenues  
 thereof.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign. Is  
 the King's treasury

A fit place for the moneys of the  
 Church,

That be the patrimony of the poor?

*John of Oxford.* 'And when the va-  
 cancy is to be filled up, the King shall  
 summon the chapter of that church to  
 court, and the election shall be made  
 in the Chapel Royal, with the consent  
 of our lord the King, and by the ad-  
 vice of his Government.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign; for  
 that would make

Our island-Church a schism from  
 Christendom,

And weight down all free choice be-  
 neath the throne.

*Foliot.* And was thine own election  
 so canonical,

Good father?

*Becket.* If it were not, Gilbert  
 Foliot,

I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,

And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Nay; by another of these customs thou

Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas

Without the license of our lord the King.

*Becket.* That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash of swords.*

Sign and obey!

*Becket.* My lords, is this a combat or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?

Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,

But that there be among you those that hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

*De Broc.* And mean to keep them, In spite of thee!

*Lords (shouting).* Sign, and obey the crown!

*Becket.* The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury

Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,

When Henry came into his own again, Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,

But his own mother's, lest the crown should be

Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry.

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?

And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

*De Broc.* And mean to hold it, or—  
*Becket.* To have my life.

*De Broc.* The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,

We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

*Becket.* Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my death

Ringin' their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

*Herbert.* And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart

As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

*John of Oxford.* Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.

*De Broc.* Why, down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,

By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!

[*Sheathing his sword.*]

*Hilary.* O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.

Save the King's honor here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,

That were but as the shadow of an assent.

*Becket.* 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon By the fierce Emperor and his Anti-

pope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,



Then must he likewise go against thy King,

And then thy King might join the Antipope,  
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals

He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.

Smoothe thou his pride—thy signing is but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope

Will be to blame—not thou. Over and over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,

And Earth should get the better—for the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

*Becket.* Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* Orders, my lord—why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father.

Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

*Becket.* If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

*Philip.* Take it not that way—balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,  
He heads the Church against the King with thee.

*Richard de Hastings (kneeling).*  
Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation

That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

*Becket.* What!

Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

*Another Templar (kneeling).*

Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son,  
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

*Philip.* Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?

Dost thou not hear?

*Becket (signs).* Why—there then—there—I sign,

And swear to obey the customs.

*Foliot.* Is it thy will,  
My lord archbishop, that we too should sign?

*Becket.* O, ay, by that canonical obedience

Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop?

*Becket.* O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith

Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.*  
Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back—blot out my name.

*Herbert.* Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

*Becket.* False to myself—it is the will of God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!

This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.

The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.

And Rome is venal even to rottenness. I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said—at least  
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my functions.

If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge—

# BECKET

*Foliot (from the table).* My lord  
archbishop, thou hast yet to  
seal.

*Becket.* First, Foliot, let me see  
what I have sign'd.

[*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this!—what! new  
and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the  
sun,

And bade me seal against the rights  
of the Church,

I would anathematize him. I will not  
seal. [*Exit with Herbert.*

*Enter KING HENRY.*

*Henry.* Where's Thomas? hath he  
signed? show me the papers!  
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

*John of Oxford.* He would not seal.  
And when he sign'd, his face was  
stormy-red—

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He  
sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a  
paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset,  
crept

Up even to the tonsure, and he  
groan'd,

'False to myself! It is the will of  
God!'

*Henry.* God's will be what it will,  
the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's  
son—

Nay, if I cannot break him as the  
prelate,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for  
him back.

[*Sits on his throne.*

Barons and bishops of our realm of  
England,

After the nineteen winters of King  
Stephen—

A reign which was no reign, when  
none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when  
murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague,  
had fill'd

All things with blood; when every  
doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-  
over;

When every baron ground his blade  
in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up  
with blood;

The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the  
wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow  
weeds,

Till famine dwarft the race—I came,  
your King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of  
the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro'  
fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption—went  
abroad

Thro' all my counties, spied my peo-  
ple's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron  
—yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own  
courts

Judging my judges, that had found a  
King

Who ranged confusions, made the  
twilight day,

And struck a shape from out the  
vague, and law

From madness. And the event—our  
fallows till'd,

Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm  
again.

So far my course, albeit not glassy-  
smooth,

Had prosper'd in the main, but sud-  
denly

Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated  
The daughter of his host, and mur-  
der'd him.

Bishops—York, London, Chichester,  
Westminster—

Ye haled this tonsured devil into your  
courts;

But since your canon will not let you  
take

Life for a life, ye but degraded him  
Where I had hang'd him. What doth

hard murder care

# THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

For degradation? and that made me  
 muse,  
 Being bounden by my coronation  
 oath  
 To do men justice. Look to it, your  
 own selves!  
 Say that a cleric murder'd an arch-  
 bishop,  
 What could ye do? Degrade, imprison  
 him—  
 Not death for death.

*John of Oxford.* But I, my liege,  
 could swear,

To death for death.

*Henry.* And, looking thro' my  
 reign,

I found a hundred ghastly murders  
 done

By men, the scum and offal of the  
 Church;

Then, glancing thro' the story of this  
 realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages,  
 Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's  
 day,

Good royal customs—had them writ-  
 ten fair

For John of Oxford here to read to  
 you.

*John of Oxford.* And I can easily  
 swear to these as being

The King's will and God's will and  
 justice; yet

I could but read a part to-day, be-  
 cause—

*Fitzurse.* Because my lord of Can-  
 terbury—

*De Tracy.* Ay,  
 This lord of Canterbury—

*De Brito.* As is his wont  
 Too much of late whene'er your royal  
 rights

Are mooted in our councils—

*Fitzurse.* —made an uproar.

*Henry.* And Becket had my bosom  
 on all this;

If ever man by bonds of grateful-  
 ness—

I raised him from the puddle of the  
 gutter,

I made him porcelain from the clay of  
 the city—

Thought that I knew him, err'd thro'  
 love of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop,  
 Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,  
 Two rivers gently flowing side by  
 side—

But no!

The bird that moults sings the same  
 song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a  
 snake again.

Snake—ay, but he that lookt a fang-  
 less one

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having doff't the Chan-  
 cellor's robe—

Flung the Great Seal of England in  
 my face—

Claim'd some of our crown lands for  
 Canterbury—

My comrade, boon companion, my  
 co-reveller,

The master of his master, the King's  
 king.—

God's eyes! I had meant to make him  
 all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well  
 have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young  
 King,

When I was hence. What did the  
 traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to  
 me!

The will of God—why, then it is my  
 will—

Is he coming?

*Messenger (entering).* With a  
 crowd of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro'  
 the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

*Henry.* His cross!

*Roger of York.* His cross! I'll front  
 him, cross to cross.

[*Exit Roger of York.*  
*Henry.* His cross! it is the traitor  
 that imputes

Treachery to his King!

It is not safe for me to look upon him.  
 Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the*

*Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

*Enter BECKET, holding his cross of silver before him. The BISHOPS come round him.*

*Hereford.* The King will not abide thee with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,  
Being thy chaplain.

*Becket.* No; it must protect me.

*Herbert.* As once he bore the standard of the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the angels.

*Foliot.* I am the dean of the province; let me bear it.

Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

*Becket.* Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

*Enter ROGER OF YORK, with his cross, advancing to BECKET.*

*Becket.* Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,  
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,

Out of thy province?

*Roger of York.* Why dost thou presume,

Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,

Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

*Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross).* Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

*Becket.* Away!  
[*Flinging him off.*]

*Foliot.* He fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!

*He fast!* is that an arm of fast? My lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,

Now as archbishop goest against the King;

For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

*Becket.* Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and thou

Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,

Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,

A worldly follower of the worldly strong.

I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear

Under what prince I fight.

*Foliot.* My lord of York,  
Let us go in to the Council, where our

bishops  
And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

*Becket.* Sons sit in judgment on their father!—then

The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves—

Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not yet written,

Saving mine order; true, too, that when written

I sign'd them—being a fool, as Foliot call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,

Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt Hereford, Foliot, and other Bishops.*]

*Roger of York.* The Church will hate thee. [*Exit.*]

*Becket.* Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

*Herbert.* To be honest is to set all  
knaves against thee.

Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them  
all!

*Hereford (re-entering).* I cannot  
brook the turmoil thou hast  
raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canter-  
bury,

Thou wert plain Thomas and not Can-  
terbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canter-  
bury

To our King's hands again, and be at  
peace.

*Hilary (re-entering).* For hath not  
thine ambition set the Church  
This day between the hammer and the  
anvil—

Faalty to the King, obedience to thy-  
self?

*Herbert.* What say the bishops?

*Hilary.* Some have pleaded for  
him,

But the King rages—most are with  
the King;

And some are reeds, that one time  
sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold  
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn  
archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore  
place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the  
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the  
Pope,

And answer thine accusers.—Art  
thou deaf?

*Becket.* I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*]

*Hilary.* Dost thou hear those  
others?

*Becket.* Ay!

*Roger of York (re-entering).* The  
King's 'God's eyes!' come now  
so thick and fast

We fear that he may reave thee of  
thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us  
To see the proud archbishop muti-  
lated.

Say that he blind thee and tear out  
thy tongue.

*Becket.* So be it. He begins at top  
with me;

They crucified Saint Peter downward.

*Roger of York.* Nay,

But for their sake who stagger be-  
twixt thine

Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

*Becket.* Hence, Satan!

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

*Fitzurse (re-entering).* My lord,  
the King demands three hun-  
dred marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead  
and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

*Becket.* Tell the King

I spent thrice that in fortifying his  
castles.

*De Tracy (re-entering).* My lord,  
the King demands seven hun-  
dred marks,

Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the  
King.

*Becket.* I led seven hundred knights  
and fought his wars.

*De Brito (re-entering).* My lord,  
the King demands five hundred  
marks,

Advanced thee at his instance by the  
Jews,

For which the King was bound se-  
curity.

*Becket.* I thought it was a gift; I  
thought it was a gift.

*Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by  
BARONS and BISHOPS).*

*Leicester.* My lord, I come unwill-  
ingly. The King

Demands a strict account of all those  
revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbacies,  
Which came into thy hands when  
Chancellor.

*Becket.* How much might that  
amount to, my lord Leicester?

*Leicester.* Some thirty—forty thou-  
sand silver marks.

*Becket.* Are these your customs? O  
my good lord Leicester,  
The King and I were brothers. All I  
had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King;  
 I shone from him, for him, his glory,  
     his  
 Reflection. Now the glory of the  
     Church  
 Hath swallow'd up the glory of the  
     King;  
 I am his no more, but hers. Grant me  
     one day

To ponder these demands.

*Leicester.* Hear first thy sentence!

The King and all his lords—

*Becket.* Son, first hear me!

*Leicester.* Nay, nay, canst thou,  
     that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline  
 The judgment of the King?

*Becket.* The King! I hold  
 Nothing in fee and barony of the  
     King.

Whatever the Church owns—she holds  
     it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to  
 One earthly sceptre.

*Leicester.* Nay, but hear thy judgment.

The King and all his barons—

*Becket.* Judgment! Barons!

Who but the bridegroom dares to  
     judge the bride,

Or he the bridegroom may appoint?  
     Not he

That is not of the house, but from the  
     street

Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true  
 To Henry and mine office that the  
     King

Would throne me in the great arch-  
     bishopric;

And I, that knew mine own infirmity,  
 For the King's pleasure rather than  
     God's cause

Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of  
     him.

Now therefore God from me with-  
     draws Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!

Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the  
     Saints, the world,

Know that when made archbishop I  
     was freed,

Before the Prince and chief justiciary,  
 From every bond and debt and obli-  
     gation

Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son. As gold  
 Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel  
     Cain,

The soul the body, and the Church  
     the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine  
     anathema,

That thou obey, not me, but God in  
     me,

Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand  
 By the King's censure, make my cry

to the Pope,  
 By whom I will be judged; refer my-  
     self,

The King, these customs, all the  
     Church, to him,

And under his authority—I depart.

[*Going.*

[*Leicester looks at him doubtfully.*

Am I a prisoner?

*Leicester.* By Saint Lazarus, no!  
 I am confounded by thee. Go in  
     peace.

*De Broc.* In peace now—but after.  
     Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

*De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and  
 Others (flinging wisps of rushes).* Ay,

go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that  
 too, perjured prelate—and that, turn-

coat shaveling! There, there, there!  
 traitor, traitor, traitor!

*Becket.* Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord,  
     enough!

*Becket.* Barons of England and of  
     Normandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem  
     to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a  
     yell.

But I that threw the mightiest knight  
     of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie,—

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord.

*Becket.* More than enough. I play the fool again.

*Enter HERALD.*

*Herald.* The King commands you, upon pain of death, That none should wrong or injure your archbishop.

*Foliot.* Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

#### SCENE IV

#### REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON

#### *A Banquet on the Tables.*

*Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.*

*First Retainer.* Do thou speak first.

*Second Retainer.* Nay, thou! Nay, thou!

Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

*First Retainer.* My lord archbishop, wilt thou permit us—

*Becket.* To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

*First Retainer.* My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

*Becket.* When?

*First Retainer.* Now.

*Becket.* To-night?

*First Retainer.* To-night, my lord.

*Becket.* And why?

*First Retainer.* My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

*Becket.* Tears? Why not stay with me then?

*First Retainer.* My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

*Becket.* I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

*First Retainer.* That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

*Becket.* No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

*First Retainer.* And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

*Becket.* God bless you all! God reddon your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to heaven, my 'God bless you,' that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

*First Retainer.* We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt Retainers.*

*Becket.* Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[*Knocking at the door.*

*Attendant.* Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

*Becket.* Cornwall's hand or Leicester's; they write marvellously alike.

[*Reading.*

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France; there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

*Becket.* And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

*Herbert.* That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

*Becket.* And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. [*Exit Herbert.*]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops.

*A Poor Man (entering) with his dog.* My lord archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

*Becket.* Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

*Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables).* BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.

*First Beggar.* Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper! When thieves fall out, honest men—

*Second Beggar.* Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

*First Beggar.* Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

*Second Beggar.* Who stole the wid-

ow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

*First Beggar.* Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop.

*Becket.* Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

*A Voice.* Becket, beware of the knife!

*Becket.* Who spoke?

*Third Beggar.* Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

*Becket.* Venison.

*Third Beggar.* Venison?

*Becket.* Buck—deer, as you call it.

*Third Beggar.* King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

*Becket.* And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with Herbert.*]

*Third Beggar.* Here—all of you—my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well—if that isn't goodly wine—

*First Beggar.* Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

*Third Beggar.* Peace!

#### FIRST BEGGAR

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb,

'The miller's away for to-night.'

'Black sheep,' quoth she, 'too black a sin for me.'



And what said the black sheep, my masters?

'We can make a black sin white.'

*Third Beggar.* Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR

'Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam.

But the miller came home that night,  
And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

*Third Beggar.* Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refectory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

*Enter the four* KNIGHTS.

*Fitzurse.* Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

*Third Beggar.* With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

*Fitzurse.* So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

*Third Beggar* (*rising and advancing*). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

*Fitzurse.* Where is he? where is he?

*Third Beggar.* With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

*Fitzurse.* France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

*De Brito.* They mock us; he is here.

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

*Fitzurse.* Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

*Third Beggar.* Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-going home after our

supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord, and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him, and another presses upon De Brito.*]

*De Brito.* Away, dog!

*Fourth Beggar.* And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

*De Brito.* Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

*De Morville.* No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

*De Brito.* Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

*Fifth Beggar.* So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

*Sixth Beggar.* And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the grangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

*De Morville.* Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*]

*Seventh Beggar.* My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

*Eighth Beggar.* And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it

along wi' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord.

*[Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.]*

*Third Beggar.* Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

*First Beggar.* I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

*Herbert of Bosham (entering).* My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

*Third Beggar.* So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

## ACT II

### SCENE I.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER

*A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.*

*Voices heard singing among the trees.*

#### DUET

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand, One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.

1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he, Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

*Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.*

*Rosamund.* Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.

*Henry.* With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre

Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while

To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest 'Becket, Becket'—

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace

With 'Becket.'

*Rosamund.* O my life's life, not to smile

Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!

Let there not be one frown in this one hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!

Look rather thou all-royal as when first

I met thee.

*Henry.* Where was that?

*Rosamund.* Forgetting that Forgets me too.

*Henry.* Nay, I remember it well. There on the moors.

*Rosamund.* And in a narrow path. A plover flew before thee. Then I saw Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,

Like sudden night in the main glare of day.

And from that height something was said to me,

I knew not what.

*Henry.* I ask'd the way.

*Rosamund.* I think so.  
So I lost mine.

*Henry.* Thou wast too shamed to answer.

*Rosamund.* Too scared—so young!

*Henry.* The rosebud of my rose!—

Well, well, no more of *him*—I have sent his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, over-seas;

Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all

By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—

So that the fool King Louis feed them not.

The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.

*Rosamund.* Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, sire?

*Henry.* And I have been as royal with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,

There wore his time studying the canon law

To work it against me. But since he cursed

My friends at Veselay, I have let them know

That if they keep him longer as their guest,

I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

*Rosamund.* And is that altogether royal?

*Henry.* Traitor!

*Rosamund.* A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

*Henry.* Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,

Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will,

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;

Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;

And round and round again. What matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown

Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

*Rosamund.* Still—thy fame too; I say that should be royal.

*Henry.* And I say,  
I care not for thy saying.

*Rosamund.* And I say,

I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King

Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have I spoken true?

*Henry.* Care dwell with me for ever when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

*Rosamund.* No need! no need! . . . There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?—My bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*]

*Henry.* I bade them clear A royal pleasance for thee, in the wood,

Not leave these country-folk at court.

*Rosamund.* I brought them In from the wood, and set them here.

I love them

More than the garden flowers, that seem at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking

The language of the land. I love *them* too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name!—

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay, I shall not prick myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

*Henry.* Thou rose of the world! Thou rose of all the roses!

[*Muttering.*]  
I am not worthy of her—this beast-body

That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long

Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels—at her side,

Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass

The faithful face of heaven—

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*  
—thine! thine!  
*Rosamund.* I know it.  
*Henry* (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of Becket.  
*Rosamund* (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? I hate Becket?  
*Henry* (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;  
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate, A bastard hate born of a former love.  
*Rosamund*. My fault to name him! O, let the hand of one To whom thy voice is all her music stay it  
But for a breath!  
[*Puts her hand before his lips.*  
Speak only of thy love.  
Why, there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—  
The happy boldness of this hand hath won it.  
Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)—Sacred! I'll kiss it too. [*Kissing it.*  
There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,  
There may be crosses in my line of life.  
*Henry*. Not half *her* hand—no hand to mate with *her*,  
If it should come to that.  
*Rosamund*. With her? with whom?  
*Henry*. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;  
Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!  
Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers [*Muttering.*  
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web—  
*Rosamund* (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun—out of the eclipse  
Narrowing my golden hour!  
*Henry*. O Rosamund,

I would be true—would tell thee all—and something  
I had to say—I love thee none the less—  
Which will so vex thee.  
*Rosamund*. Something against *me*?  
*Henry*. No, no, against myself.  
*Rosamund*. I will not hear it.  
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.  
I'll call thee little Geoffrey.  
*Henry*. Call him!  
*Rosamund*. Geoffrey!

*Enter GEOFFREY.*

*Henry*. How the boy grows!  
*Rosamund*. Ay, and his brows are thine;  
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.  
*Geoffrey*. My liege, what has thou brought me?  
*Henry*. Venal imp!  
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?  
*Geoffrey*. O, yes, my liege.  
*Henry*. 'O, yes, my liege!' He speaks  
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.  
Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?  
*Geoffrey*. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it me.  
*Henry*. It is, my boy, to side with the King when Chancellor, and then to be made archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.  
*Geoffrey*. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.  
*Henry* (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any way and play with as thou wilt—which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play. [*Exit Geoffrey.*  
A pretty lusty boy.  
*Rosamund*. So like to thee;  
Like to be liker.  
*Henry*. Not in my chin, I hope!  
That threatens double.

*Rosamund.* Thou art manlike perfect.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,  
Thou 'dst say as much—the goodly way of women  
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant  
No ill befall or him or thee when I Am gone!

*Rosamund.* Is he thy enemy?

*Henry.* He? who? ay!

*Rosamund.* Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.

*Henry.* And I could tear him asunder with wild horses  
Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!

More like is he to excommunicate me.

*Rosamund.* And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint  
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand  
Before he flash'd the bolt.

*Henry.* And when he flash'd it  
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but he will not.

*Henry.* Ay! but if he did?

*Rosamund.* O, then! O, then! I almost fear to say  
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate  
His excommunication, clinging to thee  
Closer than ever.

*Henry* (*raising Rosamund and kissing her*). My brave-hearted Rose!

Hath he ever been to see thee?

*Rosamund.* Here? not he.  
And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

*Henry.* Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

*Rosamund.* Besides, we came away in such a heat,  
I brought not even my crucifix.

*Henry.* Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which Eleanor gave him.*]

*Rosamund.* O, beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine  
Be mine again?

*Henry* (*throwing it round her neck*). Thine—as I am—till death!

*Rosamund.* Death? no! I'll have it with me in my shroud,  
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

*Henry.* Nay—I must go; but when thou layest thy lip  
To this, remembering One who died for thee,

Remember also one who lives for thee

Out there in France; for I must hence to brave

The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

*Rosamund* (*kneeling*). O, by thy love for me, all mine for thee,  
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell!

I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.

*Henry.* Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost  
His ball into the brook! makes after it too

To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey! Geoffrey!  
[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

## MONTMIRAIL

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' JOHN OF OXFORD and HENRY. *Crowd in the distance.*

*John of Oxford.* You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?

*Henry.* Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.  
I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,

As if he wore the crown already—No, We will not have him crown'd.

'T is true what Becket told me, that the mother

# BECKET

Would make him play his kingship  
against mine.

*John of Oxford.* Not have him  
crown'd?

*Henry.* Not now—not yet! and  
Becket—

Becket should crown him were he  
crown'd at all;

But, since we would be lord of our  
own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,  
Has fled our presence and our feeding-  
grounds.

*John of Oxford.* Cannot a smooth  
tongue lick him whole again

To serve your will?

*Henry.* He hates my will, not me.

*John of Oxford.* There's York, my  
liege.

*Henry.* But England scarce would  
hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd  
by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice  
himself.

There is a movement yonder in the  
crowd—

See if our pious—what shall I call  
him, John?—

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn  
suzerain,

Be yet within the field.

*John of Oxford.* I will. [*Exit.*

*Henry.* Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holi-  
ness

Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch  
again,

And we shall hear him presently with  
clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa—at last  
tongue-free

To blast my realms with excommuni-  
cation

And interdict. I must patch up a  
peace—

A peace in this long-tugged-at, thread-  
bare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church—to  
rend again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight  
thro' shoals.

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath con-  
quer'd me

For the moment. So we make our  
peace with him.

*Enter LOUIS*

Brother of France, what shall be done  
with Becket?

*Louis.* The holy Thomas! Brother,  
you have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope,  
between

The Pope and Antipope—a perilous  
game

For men to play with God.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, good brother,  
They call you the Monk-King.

*Louis.* Who calls me? she  
That was my wife, now yours? You  
have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God  
she prove

True wife to you. You have the better  
of us

In secular matters.

*Henry.* Come, confess, good  
brother,

You did your best or worst to keep her  
Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it  
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce  
again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we  
convene

This conference but to babble of our  
wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

*Louis.* We fought in the East,  
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our  
mail,

And push'd our lances into Saracen  
hearts.

We never hounded on the State at  
home

To spoil the Church.

*Henry.* How should you see this  
rightly?

*Louis.* Well, well, no more! I am  
proud of my 'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me; and, brother,  
Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our  
archbishop  
Stagger on the slope decks for any  
rough sea  
Blown by the breath of kings. We do  
forgive you  
For aught you wrought against us.

[*Henry holds up his hand.*]

Nay, I pray you,  
Do not defend yourself. You will do  
much  
To rake out all old dying heats if  
you,  
At my requesting, will but look into  
The wrongs you did him, and restore  
his kin,  
Reseat him on his throne of Canter-  
bury,  
Be, both, the friends you were.

*Henry.* The friends we were!  
Co-mates we were, and had our sport  
together.  
Co-kings we were, and made the laws  
together.  
The world had never seen the like be-  
fore.  
You are too cold to know the fashion  
of it.  
Well, well, we will be gentle with him,  
gracious—  
Most gracious.

*Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF  
OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT  
FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE, etc.*

Only that the rift he made  
May close between us, here I am  
wholly king,  
The word should come from him.

*Becket (kneeling).* Then, my dear  
liege,  
I here deliver all this controversy  
Into your royal hands.

*Henry.* Ah, Thomas, Thomas,  
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

*Becket (rising).* Saving God's  
honor!

*Henry.* Out upon thee, man!  
Saving the devil's honor, his yes and  
no.  
Knights, bishops, earls, this London-  
spawn—by Mahound,

I had sooner have been born a Mus-  
sulman—

Less clashing with their priests—  
I am half-way down the slope—will  
no man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces—I stay my-  
self—

Puff—it is gone. You, Master Becket,  
you

That owe to me your power over me—  
Nay, nay—

Brother of France, you have taken,  
cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own  
church by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had  
him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend  
you too:

For whatsoever may displease him—  
that

Is clean against God's honor—a shift,  
a trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out  
of all

My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none  
may dream

I go against God's honor—ay, or him-  
self

In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from  
England,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and  
Anjou;

Let these decide on what was custom-  
ary

In olden days, and all the Church of  
France

Decide on their decision, I am con-  
tent.

More, what the mightiest and the  
holiest

Of all his predecessors may have done  
Even to the least and meanest of my

own,  
Let him do the same to me—I am  
content.

*Louis.* Ay, ay! the King humbles  
himself enough.

*Becket (aside).* Words! he will  
wriggle out of them like an eel  
When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My  
lieges and my lords,

The thanks of Holy Church are due  
to those  
that went before us for their work,  
which we  
Inheriting reap an easier harvest.  
Yet—

*Louis.* My lord, will you be greater  
than the Saints,  
More than Saint Peter? whom—what  
is it you doubt?  
Behold your peace at hand.

*Becket.* I say that those  
Who went before us did not wholly  
clear

The deadly growths of earth, which  
hell's own heat  
So dwelt on that they rose and dark-  
en'd heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they  
had torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again;  
our trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they  
were men

Defective or excessive, must we fol-  
low

All that they overdid or underdid?  
Nay, if they were defective as Saint  
Peter

Denying Christ, who yet defied the  
tyrant,

We hold by his defiance, not his de-  
fect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,  
No, to suppress God's honor for the  
sake

Of any king that breathes. No, God  
forbid!

*Henry.* No! God forbid! and turn  
me Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his  
prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you  
shall have

None other God but me—me, Thomas,  
son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant.  
Out!

I hear no more. *[Exit.*

*Louis.* Our brother's anger puts him,  
Poor man, beside himself—not wise.  
My lord,

We have claspt your cause, believing  
that our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he  
proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant  
the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my  
good lord,

We that are kings are something in  
this world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself  
from under

The wings of France. We shelter you  
no more. *[Exit.*

*John of Oxford.* I am glad that  
France hath scouted him at  
last.

I told the Pope what manner of man  
he was. *[Exit.*

*Roger of York.* Yea, since he flouts  
the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead  
dog! *[Exit.*

*Foliot.* Yea, let a stranger spoil his  
heritage,

And let another take his bishopric!  
*[Exit.*

*De Broc.* Our castle, my lord, be-  
longs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. *[Exit.*

*Fitzurse.* When you will.  
*[Exit.*

*Becket.* Cursed be John of Oxford,  
Roger of York,

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De  
Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from  
our see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of  
them

That sow this hate between my lord  
and me!

*Voices from the Crowd.* Blessed be  
the lord archbishop, who hath with-  
stood two kings to their faces for the  
honor of God.

*Becket.* Out of the mouths of babes  
and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but  
hold by crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown  
in heaven

Is my true king.



*Herbert.* Thy true King bade thee  
be

A fisher of men; thou hast them in  
thy net.

*Becket.* I am too like the King  
here; both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better  
have been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good *Herbert*,

Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the  
petty rill

That falls into it—the green field—  
the gray church—

The simple lobster-basket, and the  
mesh—

The more or less of daily labor done—  
The pretty gaping bills in the home-  
nest

Piping for bread—the daily want sup-  
plied—

The daily pleasure to supply it.

*Herbert.* Ah, Thomas,  
You had not borne it, no, not for a  
day.

*Becket.* Well, maybe, no.

*Herbert.* But bear with *Walter*  
*Map*,

For here he comes to comment on the  
time.

*Enter WALTER MAP.*

*Walter Map.* Pity, my lord, that  
you have quenched the warmth of  
France toward you, tho' His Holiness,  
after much smouldering and smoking,  
be kindled again upon your quar-  
ter.

*Becket.* Ay, if he do not end in  
smoke again.

*Walter Map.* My lord, the fire,  
when first kindled, said to the smoke,  
'Go up, my son, straight to heaven.'  
And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon  
the Northeast took and turned him  
Southwest, then the Southwest turned  
him Northeast, and so of the other  
winds; but it was in him to go up  
straight if the time had been quieter.  
Your lordship affects the unwaver-  
ing perpendicular; but His Holiness,  
pushed one way by the Empire and

another by England, if he move at all  
—Heaven stay him!—is fain to diag-  
onalize.

*Herbert.* Diagonalize! thou art a  
word-monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalize.  
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.  
Diagonalize!

*Walter Map.* Is the world any the  
worse for my verses if the Latin  
rhymes be rolled out from a full  
mouth? or any harm done to the peo-  
ple if my jest be in defence of the  
Truth?

*Becket.* Ay, if the jest be so done  
that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of  
it,

Till Truth herself be shamed of her  
defender.

*Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map!*

*Walter Map.* Is that my case? so if  
the city be sick, and I cannot call the  
kennel sweet, your lordship would sus-  
pend me from verse-writing, as you  
suspended yourself after sub-writing  
to the customs.

*Becket.* I pray God pardon mine in-  
firmity!

*Walter Map.* Nay, my lord, take  
heart; for tho' you suspended your-  
self, the Pope let you down again; and  
tho' you suspend Foliot or another,  
the Pope will not leave them in sus-  
pense, for the Pope himself is always  
in suspense, like Mahound's coffin  
hung between heaven and earth—al-  
ways in suspense, like the scales, till  
the weight of Germany or the gold of  
England brings one of them down to  
the dust—always in suspense, like the  
tail of the horologe—to and fro—  
tick-tack—we make the time, we keep  
the time, ay, and we serve the time;  
for I have heard say that if you boxed  
the Pope's ears with a purse, you  
might stagger him, but he would  
pocket the purse. No saying of mine—  
*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* But the King  
hath bought half the College of Red-  
hats. He warmed to you to-day, and  
you have chilled him again. Yet you  
both love God. Agree with him quickly

again, even for the sake of the Church.  
My one grain of good counsel which  
you will not swallow. I hate a split be-  
tween old friendships as I hate the  
dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian  
monk, that will swallow anything.  
Farewell. *[Exit.]*

*Becket.* Map scoffs at Rome. I all  
but hold with Map.  
Save for myself no Rome were left in  
England,  
All had been his. Why should this  
Rome, this Rome,  
Still choose Barabbas rather than the  
Christ,  
Absolve the left-hand thief and damn  
the right?  
Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacri-  
lege,  
Which even Peter had not dared?  
condemn  
The blameless exile?—

*Herbert.* Thee, thou holy Thomas!  
I would that thou hadst been the Holy  
Father.

*Becket.* I would have done my most  
to keep Rome holy,  
I would have made Rome know she  
still is Rome—  
Who stands aghast at her eternal self  
And shakes at mortal kings—her  
vacillation,  
Avarice, craft—O God, how many an  
innocent  
Has left his bones upon the way to  
Rome  
Unwept, uncared for! Yea—on mine  
own self  
The King had had no power except for  
Rome.

'T is not the King who is guilty of  
mine exile,  
But Rome, Rome, Rome!

*Herbert.* My lord, I see this Louis  
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his  
realm.

*Becket.* He said as much before.  
Thou art no prophet,  
Nor yet a prophet's son.

*Herbert.* Whatever he say,  
Deny not thou God's honor for a king  
The King looks troubled.

*Re-enter KING LOUIS.*

*Louis.* My dear lord archbishop,  
I learn but now that those poor Poite-  
vins

That in thy cause were stirr'd against  
King Henry  
Have been, despite his kingly promise  
given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used  
And put to pain. I have lost all trust  
in him.

The Church alone hath eyes—and now  
I see

That I was blind—suffer the phrase—  
surrendering

God's honor to the pleasure of a man.  
Forgive me and absolve me, holy  
father. *[Kneels.]*

*Becket.* Son, I absolve thee in the  
name of God.

*Louis (rising).* Return to Sens,  
where we will care for you.

The wine and wealth of all our France  
are yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace  
with all. *[Exeunt.]*

*Voices from the Crowd.* Long live  
the good King Louis! God bless the  
great archbishop!

*Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF  
OXFORD.*

*Henry (looking after King Louis  
and Becket).* Ay, there they go  
—both backs are turn'd to  
me—

Why, then I strike into my former  
path

For England, crown young Henry  
there, and make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me!  
John,

Thou hast served me heretofore with  
Rome—and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

*John of Oxford.* For this reason,  
That, being ever duteous to the King,  
I evermore have sworn upon his  
side,

And ever mean to do it.

*Henry (claps him on the shoulder).*  
 Honest John!  
 To Rome again! the storm begins  
 again.  
 Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with  
 our coins,  
 Threaten our junction with the Em-  
 peror—flatter  
 And fright the Pope—bribe all the  
 cardinals—leave  
 Lateran and Vatican in one dust of  
 gold—  
 Swear and unswear, state and misstate  
 thy best!  
 I go to have young Henry crown'd by  
 York.

## ACT III

## SCENE I.—THE BOWER

## HENRY and ROSAMUND.

*Henry.* All that you say is just. I  
 cannot answer it  
 Till better times, when I shall put  
 away—  
*Rosamund.* What will you put  
 away?  
*Henry.* That which you ask me  
 Till better times. Let it content you  
 now  
 There is no woman that I love so  
 well.  
*Rosamund.* No woman but should  
 be content with that—  
*Henry.* And one fair child to fondle!  
*Rosamund.* O, yes, the child  
 We waited for so long—Heaven's gift  
 at last—  
 And how you doted on him then! To-  
 day  
 I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—  
 yes—  
 But then the child *is* such a child!  
 What chance  
 That he should ever spread into the  
 man  
 Here in our silence? I have done my  
 best.  
 I am not learn'd.  
*Henry.* I am the King, his father,

And I will look to it. Is our secret  
 ours?  
 Have you had any alarm? no stranger?  
*Rosamund.* No.  
 The warder of the bower hath given  
 himself  
 Of late to wine. I sometimes think he  
 sleeps  
 When he should watch; and yet what  
 fear? the people  
 Believe the wood enchanted. No one  
 comes,  
 Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of  
 wine  
 Springs from the loneliness of my poor  
 bower,  
 Which weighs even on me.  
*Henry.* Yet these tree-towers,  
 Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,  
 —the voice  
 Of the perpetual brook, these golden  
 slopes  
 Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that  
 was your saying,  
 All pleased you so at first.  
*Rosamund.* Not now so much.  
 My Anjou bower was scarce as beau-  
 tiful.  
 But you were oftener there. I have  
 none but you.  
 The brook's voice is not yours, and no  
 flower, not  
 The sun himself, should he be changed  
 to one,  
 Could shine away the darkness of that  
 gap  
 Left by the lack of love.  
*Henry.* The lack of love!  
*Rosamund.* Of one we love. Nay, I  
 would not be bold,  
 Yet hoped ere this you might—  
 [Looks earnestly at him.]  
*Henry.* Anything further?  
*Rosamund.* Only my best bower-  
 maiden died of late,  
 And that old priest whom John of  
 Salisbury trusted  
 Hath sent another.  
*Henry.* Secret?  
*Rosamund.* I but ask'd her  
 One question, and she prim'd her  
 mouth and put

Her hands together—thus—and said,  
 God help her,  
 That she was sworn to silence.

*Henry.* What did you ask her?

*Rosamund.* Some daily something—  
 nothing.

*Henry.* Secret, then?

*Rosamund.* I do not love her. Must  
 you go, my liege,

So suddenly?

*Henry.* I came to England sud-  
 denly,

And on a great occasion sure to wake  
 As great a wrath in Becket—

*Rosamund.* Always Becket!

He always comes between us.

*Henry.* And to meet it

I needs must leave as suddenly. It is  
 raining,

Put on your hood and see me to the  
 bounds.

MARGERY (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower  
 Under the rose!  
 Bee must n't buzz,  
 Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,  
 Nobody near!  
 Grasshopper, grasshopper,  
 Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,  
 Tit on the tree!  
 Bird must n't tell,  
 Whoop—he can see.

*Enter MARGERY.*

I ha' been but a week here and I ha'  
 seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it  
 's no more than a week since our old  
 Father Philip that has confessed our  
 mother for twenty years, and she was  
 hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh  
 at the end of our last crust, and that  
 mouldy, and she cried out on him to  
 put me forth in the world and to make  
 me a woman of the world, and to win  
 my own bread, whereupon he asked  
 our mother if I could keep a quiet  
 tongue i' my head, and not speak till  
 I was spoke to, and I answered for my-

self that I never spoke more than was  
 needed, and he told me he would ad-  
 vance me to the service of a great  
 lady, and took me ever so far away,  
 and gave me a great pat o' the cheek  
 for a pretty wench, and said it was a  
 pity to blindfold such eyes as mine,  
 and such to be sure they be, but he  
 blinded 'em for all that, and so  
 brought me no-hows as I may say, and  
 the more shame to him after his  
 promise, into a garden and not into the  
 world, and bade me whatever I saw  
 not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be  
 well for me in the end, for there were  
 great ones who would look after me,  
 and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-  
 day—and then not to speak one word,  
 for that 's the rule o' the garden, tho'  
 to be sure if I had been Eve i' the  
 garden I should n't ha' minded the  
 apple, for what 's an apple, you know,  
 save to a child, and I 'm no child,  
 but more a woman o' the world than  
 my lady here, and I ha' seen that I ha'  
 seen—tho' to be sure if I had n't  
 minded it we should all on us ha' had  
 to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs,  
 but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced  
 one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been  
 always summer, and anyhow I am as  
 well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha'  
 seen what I ha' seen, and what 's the  
 good of my talking to myself, for here  
 comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*),  
 and, my lady, tho' I should n't speak  
 one word, I wish you joy o' the King's  
 brother.

*Rosamund.* What is it you  
 mean?

*Margery.* I mean your Goodman,  
 your husband, my lady, for I saw your  
 ladyship a-parting wi' him even now  
 i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o'  
 bluebells for your ladyship's nose to  
 smell on—and I ha' seen the King  
 once at Oxford, and he 's as like the  
 King as fingernail to fingernail, and I  
 thought at first it was the King, only  
 you know the King 's married, for  
 King Louis—

*Rosamund.* Married!

*Margery.* Years and years, my lady,  
for her husband, King Louis—

*Rosamund.* Hush!

*Margery.* And I thought if it were  
the King's brother he had a better  
bride than the King, for the people do  
say that his is bad beyond all reckon-  
ing, and—

*Rosamund.* The people lie.

*Margery.* Very like, my lady, but  
most on 'em know an honest woman  
and a lady when they see her, and be-  
sides they say she makes songs, and  
that 's against her, for I never knew an  
honest woman that could make songs,  
tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me  
old songs by the hour, but then, God  
help her, she had 'em from her mother,  
and her mother from her mother back  
and back for ever so long, but none on  
'em ever made songs, and they were  
all honest.

*Rosamund.* Go, you shall tell me of  
her some other time.

*Margery.* There 's none so much to  
tell on her, my lady, only she kept the  
seventh commandment better than  
some I know on, or I could n't look  
your ladyship i' the face, and she  
brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that  
is to say in her time when she had the  
'Crown.'

*Rosamund.* The crown who?

*Margery.* Mother.

*Rosamund.* I mean her whom you  
call—fancy—my husband's brother's  
wife.

*Margery.* O, Queen Eleanor. Yes,  
my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to  
speak a word, I can tell you all about  
her, if—

*Rosamund.* No word now. I am  
faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go.  
What! will you anger me?

[*Exit Margery.*]

He charged me not to question any  
of those

About me. Have I? no! she ques-  
tion'd me.

Did she not slander him? Should she  
stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my  
side,

To question her? Nay, can I send her  
hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the  
dark

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to  
cage, and known

Nothing but him—happy to know no  
more,

So that he loved me—and he loves me  
—yes,

And bound me by his love to secrecy  
Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I  
Not heard ill things of her in France?

O, she 's

The Queen of France. I see it—some  
confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear  
aright,

Myself confused with parting from  
the King.

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Bee must n't buzz,  
Whoop—but he knows.

*Rosamund.* Yet her—what her? he  
hinted of some her—

When he was here before—  
Something that would displease me.

Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the com-  
mon bush,

And, being scratch'd, returns to his  
true rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick  
him for it,

Even with a word?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Bird must n't tell,  
Whoop—he can see.

*Rosamund.* I would not hear him.  
Nay—there 's more—he

frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to  
that'—

To that—to what?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Whoop—but he knows,  
Whoop—but he knows.

*Rosamund.* O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—  
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

*Enter GEOFFREY.*

*Geoffrey!*  
*Geoffrey.* What are you crying for,  
when the sun shines?

*Rosamund.* Hath not thy father left  
us to ourselves?

*Geoffrey.* Ay, but he 's taken the  
rain with him. I hear Margery: I 'll go  
play with her. [*Exit* Geoffrey.]

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay,  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!

But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom—  
O rainbow, stay!

SCENE II

OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSA-  
MUND'S BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

*Eleanor.* Up from the salt lips of  
the land we two  
Have track'd the King to this dark in-  
land wood;  
And somewhere hereabouts he van-  
ish'd. Here  
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.  
Watch! he will out again, and pres-  
ently,  
Seeing he must to Westminster and  
crown  
Young Henry there to-morrow.

*Fitzurse.* We have watch'd  
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out  
again,  
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*  
Hark! Madam!

*Eleanor.* Ay,  
How ghostly sounds that horn in the  
black wood!

[*A countryman flying.*  
Whither away, man? what are you  
flying from?

*Countryman.* The witch! the witch!  
she sits naked by a great heap of gold  
in the middle of the wood, and when  
the horn sounds she comes out as a  
wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in  
there to-day. I holla'd to him, but he  
did n't hear me; he'll never out again,  
the witch has got him. I dare n't stay  
—I dare n't stay!

*Eleanor.* Kind of the witch to give  
thee warning, tho'.

[*Man flies.*  
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's  
fear

Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd  
the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*  
*Fitzurse.* Again! stay, fool, and tell  
me why thou fliest.

*Countryman.* Fly thou too. The  
King keeps his forest head of game  
here, and when that horn sounds a  
score of wolf-dogs are let loose that  
will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not  
till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

*Eleanor.* This is the likelier tale.  
We have hit the place.  
Now let the King's fine game look to  
itself. [*Horn.*

*Fitzurse.* Again!—  
And far on in the dark heart of the  
wood  
I hear the yelping of the hounds of  
hell.

*Eleanor.* I have my dagger here to  
still their throats.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, madam, not to-  
night—the night is falling.  
What can be done to-night?

*Eleanor.* Well—well—away.

## SCENE III

TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.  
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE ENGLISH  
AND FRENCH BARONAGE

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

*Becket.* See here!

*Herbert.* What's here?

*Becket.* A notice from the priest  
To whom our John of Salisbury committed

The secret of the bower, that our  
wolf-Queen  
Is prowling round the fold. I should  
be back

In England even for this.

*Herbert.* These are by-things  
In the great cause.

*Becket.* The by-things of the Lord  
Are the wrong'd innocences that will  
cry

From all the hidden by-ways of the  
world

In the great day against the wronger.  
I know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all before  
The Church should suffer wrong!

*Herbert.* Do you see, my lord,  
There is the King talking with Walter  
Map?

*Becket.* He hath the Pope's last letters,  
and they threaten  
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict;

Yet he can scarce be touching upon  
those,

Or scarce would smile that fashion.

*Herbert.* Winter sunshine!  
Beware of opening out thy bosom to  
it,

Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock  
should catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!  
He bows, he bares his head, he is  
coming hither.

Still with a smile.

*Enter KING HENRY and WALTER MAP.*

*Henry.* We have had so many hours  
together, Thomas,

So many happy hours alone together,  
That I would speak with you once  
more alone.

*Becket.* My liege, your will and  
happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt King and Becket.*

*Herbert.* The same smile still.

*Walter Map.* Do you see that great  
black cloud that hath come over the  
sun and cast us all into shadow?

*Herbert.* And feel it too.

*Walter Map.* And see you yon side-  
beam that is forced from under it,  
and sets the church-tower over there  
all a-hell-fire as it were?

*Herbert.* Ay.

*Walter Map.* It is this black, bell-  
silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hin-  
dering interdict that hath squeezed  
out this side-smile upon Canterbury,  
whereof may come conflagration.  
Were I Thomas, I would n't trust it.  
Sudden change is a house on sand;  
and tho' I count Henry honest enough,  
yet when fear creeps in at the front,  
honesty steals out at the back, and the  
King at last is fairly scared by this  
cloud—this interdict. I have been  
more for the King than the Church  
in this matter—yea, even for the sake  
of the Church; for, truly, as the case  
stood, you had safer have slain an  
archbishop than a she-goat. But our  
recoverer and upholder of customs  
hath in this crowning of young Henry  
by York and London so violated the  
immemorial usage of the Church,  
that, like the grave-digger's child I  
have heard of, trying to ring the bell,  
he hath half-hanged himself in the  
rope of the Church, or rather pulled  
all the Church with the Holy Father  
astride of it down upon his own head.

*Herbert.* Were you there?

*Walter Map.* In the church rope?  
—no. I was at the crowning, for I  
have pleasure in the pleasure of  
crowds, and to read the faces of men  
at a great show.

*Herbert.* And how did Roger of  
York comport himself?

*Walter Map.* As magnificently and  
archiepiscopally as our Thomas would

have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger, the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face, as who should say 'what's to follow?' but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

*Herbert.* And the father-king?

*Walter Map.* The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—

*Herbert.* Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

*Walter Map.* For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

*Herbert.* There again, Goliassing and Goliathizing!

*Walter Map.* And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

*Herbert.* And all manner of creeping things too?

*Walter Map.* Well, there were ab-bots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we floursheid

out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

*Herbert.* No, what was it?

*Walter Map.* Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, 'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

*Herbert.* Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is!

*Re-enter HENRY and BECKETT. (During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.)*

*Becket.* Ay, King! for in thy kingdom as thou knowest,  
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—  
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—  
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—  
The golden ornaments are stolen from her—



*Henry.* Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,  
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

*Becket.* Send back again those exiles of my kin  
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

*Henry.* Have I not promised, man,  
to send them back?

*Becket.* Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales  
Or privilege, crowning thy young son by York,  
London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

*Henry.* York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

*Becket.* There was no Canterbury in William's time.

*Henry.* But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

*Becket.* But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

*Henry.* And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

*Becket.* And is it then with thy goodwill that I  
Proceed against thine evil councillors,  
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those  
Who made the second mitre play the first,  
And acted me?

*Henry.* Well, well, then—have thy way!  
It may be they were evil councillors.  
What more, my lord archbishop?  
What more, Thomas?  
I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,  
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

*Becket.* More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

*Henry (holding out his hand).* Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England.

My friend of Canterbury and myself  
Are now once more at perfect amity.  
Unkingly should I be, and most un-  
knightly,

Not striving still, however much in vain,

To rival him in Christian charity.

*Herbert.* All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

*Henry.* And so farewell until we meet in England.

*Becket.* I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

*Henry.* How, do you make me a traitor?

*Becket.* No indeed,  
That be far from thee.

*Henry.* Come, stay with us, then,  
Before you part for England.

*Becket.* I am bound  
For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,  
Who helpt me when none else.

*Herbert.* He said thy life  
Was not one hour's worth in England save

King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

*Henry.* He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,  
When I was in mine anger with King Louis,

I swear I would not give the kiss of peace,

Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,

Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,

I would there were that perfect trust between us,

That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King

Had come between us! Even now—who knows?—

I might deliver all things to thy hand—

If—but I say no more—farewell, my lord.

*Becket.* Farewell, my liege!

[Exit Henry, then the Barons and Bishops.]

*Walter Map.* There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him.

*Becket.* He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

*Walter Map.* And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

*Becket.* Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's '*if*  
Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

*Herbert.* O, Thomas,  
I could fall down and worship thee,  
my Thomas,  
For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

*Becket.* Nay, of the people there are many with me.

*Walter Map.* I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who shall I say?—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

*Becket.* At their peril, at their peril—

*Walter Map.* For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his

free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*]

*Herbert.* Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King  
Speak of the customs?

*Becket.* No!—To die for it—  
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.  
The State will die, the Church can  
never die.

The King's not like to die for that  
which dies;

But I must die for that which never  
dies.

It will be so—my visions in the  
Lord—

It must be so, my friend! the wolves  
of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that  
the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map  
would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths.  
And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man dis-  
appears,

That perfect trust may come again  
between us,

And there, there, there, not here I  
shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within  
the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move  
away!

And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT IV

### SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER

*Geoffrey (coming out of the wood).*  
Light again! light again! Margery?  
no, that's a finer thing there. How it  
glitters!

*Eleanor (entering).* Come to me,  
little one. How camest thou hither?

*Geoffrey.* On my legs.

*Eleanor.* And mighty pretty legs  
too. Thou art the prettiest child I  
ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

*Geoffrey.* No; I only love mother.

*Eleanor.* Ay; and who is thy mother?

*Geoffrey.* They call her— But she lives secret, you see.

*Eleanor.* Why?

*Geoffrey.* Don't know why.

*Eleanor.* Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell.

*Eleanor.* What does she call him?

*Geoffrey.* My liege.

*Eleanor.* Pretty one, how camest thou?

*Geoffrey.* There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

*Eleanor.* I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

*Geoffrey.* There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

*Eleanor.* She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

*Geoffrey.* But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

*Eleanor.* We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—(aside) little bastard! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

*Geoffrey.* No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

*Eleanor.* I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

*Geoffrey.* By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

*Eleanor.* Where's the warder?

*Geoffrey.* Very bad. Somebody struck him.

*Eleanor.* Ay? who was that?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come

along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

### ROSAMUND'S BOWER

*Rosamund.* The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost;

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back.

I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,

Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery

And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

*Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.*

*Geoffrey,* the pain thou hast put me to!

[*Seeing Eleanor.*

Ha, you!

How came you hither?

*Eleanor.* Your own child brought me hither!

*Geoffrey.* You said you could n't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

*Rosamund.* How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret, Of and belonging to the King of England,

More sacred than his forests for the chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste

Lest worse befall you.

*Eleanor.* Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King

Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman—

Belongings, paramours, whom it  
pleases him  
To call his wives; but so it chances,  
child,  
That I am his main paramour, his u-  
tana.  
But since the fondest pair of doves  
will jar,  
Even in a cage of gold, we had words  
of late,  
And thereupon he call'd my children  
bastards.  
Do you believe that you are married  
to him?

*Rosamund.* I should believe it.

*Eleanor.* You must not believe it,  
Because I have a wholesome medicine  
here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer,  
beauty!

Do you believe that you are married  
to him?

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey, my boy, I  
saw the ball you lost in the fork of  
the great willow over the brook. Go.  
See that you do not fall in. Go.

*Geoffrey.* And leave you alone with  
the good fairy. She calls you beauty,  
but I don't like her looks. Well, you  
bid me go, and I'll have my ball any-  
how. Shall I find you asleep when I  
come back?

*Rosamund.* Go.

[Exit Geoffrey.]

*Eleanor.* He is easily found again.

Do you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-  
draught;

But if you should not care to take it  
—see! [Draws a dagger.]

What! have I scared the red rose  
from your face

Into your heart? But this will find it  
there,

And dig it from the root for ever.

*Rosamund.* Help! help!

*Eleanor.* They say that walls have  
ears; but these, it seems,  
Have none! and I have none—to pity  
thee.

*Rosamund.* I do beseech you—my  
child is so young,

So backward too; I cannot leave him  
yet.

I am not so happy I could not die my-  
self,

But the child is so young. You have  
children—his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if  
you love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great  
wrong done

Somehow; but if you do not—there  
are those

Who say you do not love him—let me  
go

With my young boy, and I will hide  
my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall  
know me;

The King shall never hear of me  
again,

But I will beg my bread along the  
world

With my young boy, and God will be  
our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.

See, I can say no more.

*Eleanor.* Will you not say you are  
not married to him?

*Rosamund.* Ay, madam, I can say  
it, if you will.

*Eleanor.* Then is thy pretty boy a  
bastard?

*Rosamund.* No.

*Eleanor.* And thou thyself a proven  
wanton?

*Rosamund.* No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from  
love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it  
love.

I have heard of such—yea, even  
among those

Who sit on thrones—I never saw any  
such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever  
You do misname me, match'd with  
any such,

I am snow to mud.

*Eleanor.* The more the pity then  
That thy true home—the heavens—

cry out for thee

Who art too pure for earth.

*Enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* Give her to me.

*Eleanor.* The Judas-lover of our passion-play  
Hath track'd us hither.

*Fitzurse.* Well, why not? I follow'd  
You and the child: he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

*Eleanor.* Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her  
Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,  
Dark even from a side glance of the moon,  
And oublietted in the centre—No!

I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

*Fitzurse.* You bade me take revenge another way—

To bring her to the dust.—Come with me, love,  
And I will love thee.—Madam, let her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King  
Would miss her and for ever.

*Eleanor.* How sayst thou, sweet-heart

Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

*Rosamund.* Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[*Eleanor offers the vial.*]

No., no! I will not have it.

*Eleanor.* Then this other,  
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught

May bloat thy beauty out of shape,  
and make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child;

While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,

A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless,  
over which

If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,

It must be broken for him.

*Rosamund.* O, I see now

Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour,

You play with words. You had never used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child—

No—mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

*Eleanor.* Play!—that bosom never Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion

As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,

Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,

Thy life is worth the wrestle for it. Arise,

And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!

The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the King!

His village darling in some lewd caress

Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.

By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I warrant

Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times

Never to leave him—and that merits death,

False oath on holy cross—for thou must leave him

To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,

The running down the chase is kinder sport

Even than the death. Who knows but that thy lover

May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee

Come hither, man; stand there. (*To Rosamund.*) Take thy one chance;

Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitzurse;

Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him

For thy life and thy son's.

*Rosamund (rising).*

I am a

Clifford,

My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.

I am to die then, tho' there stand be-  
side thee

One who might grapple with thy dag-  
ger, if he

Had aught of man, or thou of woman;  
or I

Would bow to such a baseness as  
would make me

Most worthy of it. Both of us will  
die,

And I will fly with my sweet boy to  
heaven,

And shriek to all the saints among the  
stars:

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of  
England!

Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,  
Whose doings are a horror to the east,  
A hissing in the west!' Have we not  
heard

Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle  
—nay,

Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own hus-  
band's father—

Nay, even the accursed heathen Sal-  
addeen—

Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before  
God.

Answer me there.

*Eleanor (raising the dagger).* This  
in thy bosom, fool,  
And after in thy bastard's!

*Enter BECKETT from behind. Catches  
hold of her arm.*

*Becket.* Murderess!

*[The dagger falls; they stare at  
one another. After a pause.]*

*Eleanor.* My lord, we know you  
proud of your fine hand,

But having now admired it long  
enough,

We find that it is mightier than it  
seems—

At least mine own is frailer; you are  
laming it.

*Becket.* And lamed and maim'd to  
dislocation, better

Than raised to take a life which  
Henry bade me

Guard from the stroke that dooms  
thee after death

To wail in deathless flame.

*Eleanor.* Nor you nor I  
Have now to learn, my lord, that our  
good Henry

Says many a thing in sudden heats  
which he

Gainsays by next sunrising—often  
ready

To tear himself for having said as  
much.

My lord, Fitzurse—

*Becket.* He too! what dost thou  
here?

Dares the bear slouch into the lion's  
den?

One downward plunge of his paw  
would rend away

Eyesight and manhood, life itself,  
from thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,  
And make thee a world's horror.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, I shall  
Remember this.

*Becket.* I do remember thee;  
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

*[Exit Fitzurse.]*

Take up your dagger; put it in the  
sheath.

*Eleanor.* Might not your courtesy  
stoop to hand it me?

But crowns must bow when mitres sit  
so high.

Well—well—too costly to be left or  
lost. *[Picks up the dagger.]*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,  
When I was there in Antioch, mar-  
vell'd at

Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;  
But wonder'd more at my much con-  
stancy

To the monk-king, Louis, our former  
burthen,

From whom, as being too kin, you  
know, my lord,

God's grace and Holy Church deliv-  
er'd us.

I think, time given, I could have  
talk'd him out of

His ten wives into one. Look at the  
hilt.

What excellent workmanship! In our  
poor west  
We cannot do it so well.

*Becket.* We can do worse.  
Madam, I saw your dagger at her  
throat;  
I heard your savage cry.

*Eleanor.* Well acted, was it?  
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—  
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you  
are known

Thro' all the courts of Christendom  
as one  
That mars a cause with over vio-  
lence.

You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak  
not of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of  
the King

Back from her churchless commerce  
with the King

To the fond arms of her first love,  
Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have  
spoilt the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she—she—  
when I strove

To work against her license for her  
good,

Bark'd out at me such monstrous  
charges that

The King himself, for love of his own  
sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her;  
whereupon

I menaced her with this, as when we  
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not  
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do  
you hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have  
lost

The ear of the King. I have it.—My  
lord paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your  
Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your  
Queen?

*Becket.* Rosamund hath not an-  
swer'd you one word;  
Madam, I will not answer you one  
word.

Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.  
Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nun-  
nery,

And live what may be left thee of a  
life

Saved as by miracle alone with Him  
Who gave it.

*Re-enter GEOFFREY.*

*Geoffrey.* Mother, you told me a  
great fib; it was n't in the wil-  
low.

*Becket.* Follow us, my son, and we  
will find it for thee—

Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt Becket, Rosamund, and  
Geoffrey.*]

*Eleanor.* The world hath trick'd her  
—that's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint—not  
mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a  
feint

Till the worm turn'd—not life shot  
up in blood,

But death drawn in;—(*looking at the  
vial*) *this* was no feint, then?  
no.

But can I swear to that, had she but  
given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, me-  
thinks

Had she but bowed herself to meet  
the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she  
loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her  
too much

To harm her. Henry—Becket tells  
him this—

To take my life might lose him Aqu-  
taine.

Too politic for that. Imprison me?

No, for it came to nothing—only a  
feint.

Did she not tell me I was playing on  
her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a  
feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who  
am, or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks  
 out their eyes  
 Who anger him, and shall not I, the  
 Queen,  
 Tear out her heart—kill, kill with  
 knife or venom  
 One of his slanderous harlots? 'None  
 of such?'  
 I love her none the more. Tut, the  
 chance gone,  
 She lives—but not for him; one point  
 is gain'd.  
 O, I that thro' the Pope divorced  
 King Louis,  
 Scorning his monkery,—I that  
 wedded Henry,  
 Honoring his manhood—will he not  
 mock at me,  
 The jealous fool balk'd of her will—  
 with *him*?  
 But he and he must never meet again.  
 Reginald Fitzurse!

*Re-enter FITZURSE.*

*Fitzurse.* Here, Madam, at your  
 pleasure.

*Eleanor.* My pleasure is to have a  
 man about me.

Why did you slink away so like a cur?

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I am as much  
 man as the King.

Madam, I fear Church-censures like  
 your King.

*Eleanor.* He grovels to the Church  
 when he 's black-blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud arch-  
 bishop,—kinglike

Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly  
 sires,

The Normans, striving still to break  
 or bind

The spiritual giant with our island  
 laws

And customs, made me for the mo-  
 ment proud

Even of that stale Church-bond which  
 link'd me with him

To bear him kingly sons. I am not so  
 sure

But that I love him still. Thou as  
 much man!

No more of that; we will to France  
 and be  
 Beforehand with the King, and brew  
 from out  
 This Godstow-Becket intermeddling  
 such  
 A strong hate-philtre as may madden  
 him—madden  
 Against his priest beyond all helle-  
 bore.

## ACT V

SCENE I.—CASTLE IN NORMANDY.  
 KING'S CHAMBER

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, JOCE-  
 LYN OF SALISBURY.

*Roger of York.* Nay, nay, my liege,  
 He rides abroad with armed follow-  
 ers,

Hath broken all his promises to thy-  
 self,

Cursed and anathematized us right  
 and left,

Stirr'd up a party there against your  
 son—

*Henry.* Roger of York, you always  
 hated him,

Even when you both were boys at  
 Theobald's.

*Roger of York.* I always hated  
 boundless arrogance.

In mine own cause I strove against  
 him there,

And in thy cause I strive against him  
 now.

*Henry.* I cannot think he moves  
 against my son,

Knowing right well with what a ten-  
 derness

He loved my son.

*Roger of York.* Before you made  
 him king.

But Becket ever moves against a king.  
 The Church is all—the crime to be a  
 king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of  
 more land

Than any crown in Europe, will not  
 yield



To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

*Henry.* Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.

*Foliot.* My royal liege, in aiming at your love,

It may be sometimes I have overshot  
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,

Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch

Behind this Becket, rather go beyond  
In scourings, macerations, mortifying,

Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.

I boast not; but you know thro' all this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,

Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,

And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,

York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,

Are push'd from out communion of the Church.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Becket hath trodden on us like worms, my liege,

Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,

Cries to the King.

*Henry (aside).* Take care o' thyself, O King!

*Joselyn of Salisbury.* Being so crush'd and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat

Because of Becket.

*Henry.* What would ye have me do?

*Roger of York.* Summon your barons; take their counsel; yet

I know—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

*Henry.* What?—Ay—but pray you do not work upon me.

I see your drift—it may be so—and yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?

He shall absolve you—you shall have redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.

I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot, and Jocelyn of Salisbury.

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.

If God would take him in some sudden way—

Would he were dead! [*Lies down.*

*Page (entering).* My liege, the Queen of England.

*Henry.* God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

*Enter* ELEANOR.

*Eleanor.* Of England? Say of Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a queen.

*Henry.* And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—

Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

*Eleanor.* The brideless Becket is thy king and mine;

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

*Henry.* Except I clap thee into prison here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.

*Eleanor.* And why, my lord, should I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine? Yet this no-wife—her six and thirty sail

Of Provence blew you to your English throne;  
And this no-wife has borne you four brave sons,  
And one of them at least is like to prove  
Bigger in our small world than thou art.

*Henry.* Ay—  
Richard, if he *be* mine—I hope him mine.  
But thou art like enough to make him thine.

*Eleanor.* Becket is like enough to make all his.

*Henry.* Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,  
That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,  
Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.

*Eleanor.* I will go live and die in Aquitaine.  
I dream'd I was the consort of a king,  
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

*Henry.* What!  
Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe  
My victor in mid-battle? I will be  
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?  
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

*Eleanor.* Why? for I *am* true wife,  
and have my fears  
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?  
*Henry (turning his head).* Away!  
Not I.

*Eleanor.* Not even the central diamond, worth, I think,  
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

*Henry.* That?

*Eleanor.* I gave it you, and you your paramour;  
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,  
So dead henceforth to you.

*Henry.* Dead! you have murder'd her.

Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.

*Eleanor.* Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.

*Henry (calling out).* Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.

*Eleanor.* And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.

*Henry.* O devil, can I free her from the grave?

*Eleanor.* You are too tragic; both of us are players

In such a comedy as our court of Provence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?

*(Offering the cross. He dashes it down.)*

Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. *(Puts it on.)*

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!

Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord

Not only of your vassals but amours,  
Thro' chastest honor of the Decalogue

Hath used the full authority of his Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery.

*Henry.* To put her into Godstow nunnery!

He dared not—liar! yet, I remember—

I do remember.

He bade me put her into a nunnery—  
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!

The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church were  
down in hell! [Exit.

*Eleanor.* Aha!

*Enter the four KNIGHTS.*

*Fitzurse.* What made the King cry  
out so furiously?

*Eleanor.* Our Becket, who will not  
absolve the bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this  
Becket.

*Fitzurse.* I hate him for his insolence to all.

*De Tracy.* And I for all his insolence to thee.

*De Brito.* I hate him for I hate him  
is my reason.

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

*De Morville.* I do not love him, for  
he did his best

To break the barons, and now braves  
the King.

*Eleanor.* Strike, then, at once, the  
King would have him—See!

*Re-enter HENRY.*

*Henry.* No man to love me, honor  
me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd  
his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came  
to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,  
To shake my throne, to push into my  
chamber—

My bed, where even the slave is private—he—

I'll have her out again, he shall absolve

The bishops—they but did my will—not you—

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?

You are no King's men—you—you—you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pestilent priest? [Exit.

[*The Knights draw their swords.*  
*Eleanor.* Are ye King's men? I am  
King's woman, I.

*The Knights.* King's men! King's men!

## SCENE II

A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

*Becket.* York said so?

*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may  
take good counsel

Even from his foe.

*Becket.* York, will say anything.  
What is he saying now? gone to the  
King

And taken our anathema with him.  
York!

Can the King de-anathematize this  
York?

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would  
thou hadst return'd to England

Like some wise prince of this world  
from his wars,

With more of olive-branch and amnesty

For foes at home—thou hast raised  
the world against thee.

*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is  
not of this world.

*John of Salisbury.* If it were more  
of this world it might be  
More of the next. A policy of wise  
pardon

Wins here as well as there. To bless  
thine enemies—

*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

*John of Salisbury.* And may there  
not be something

Of this world's leaven in thee too,  
when crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her  
rights

And thine own wrong so pitilessly?  
Ah, Thomas,

The lightnings that we think are only  
Heaven's

# BECKET

Flash sometimes out of earth against  
the heavens.  
The soldier, when he lets his whole  
self go  
Lost in the common good, the com-  
mon wrong,  
Strikes truest even for his own self.  
I crave  
Thy pardon—I have still leave to  
speak.  
Thou hast waged God's war against  
the King; and yet  
We are self-uncertain creatures, and  
we may,  
Yea, even when we know not, mix our  
spites  
And private hates with our defense of  
Heaven.

*Enter EDWARD GRIM*

*Becket.* Thou art but yesterday  
from Cambridge, Grim;  
What say ye there of Becket?

*Grim.* I believe him  
The bravest in our roll of primates  
down  
From Austin—there are some—for  
there are men

Of canker'd judgment everywhere—

*Becket.* Who hold  
With York, with York against me.

*Grim.* Well, my lord,  
A stranger monk desires access to you.

*Becket.* York against Canterbury,  
York against God!

I am open to him. [*Exit Grim.*]

*Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.*

*Rosamund.* Can I speak with you  
Alone, my father?

*Becket.* Come you to confess?

*Rosamund.* Not now.

*Becket.* Then speak; this is my  
other self,  
Who, like my conscience, never lets  
me be.

*Rosamund* (*throwing back the  
cowl*). I know him, our good  
John of Salisbury.

*Becket.* Breaking already from thy  
novitiate

To plunge into this bitter world  
again—

These wells of Marah! I am grieved,  
my daughter.

I thought that I had made a peace  
for thee.

*Rosamund.* Small peace was mine  
in my novitiate, father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful  
whisper crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate the  
King.

I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had  
with me

The monk's disguise thou gavest me  
for my bower;

I think our abbess knew it and al-  
low'd it.

I fled, and found thy name a charm  
to get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber  
once;

I told him I was bound to see the  
archbishop:

'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I  
pass'd

From house to house. In one a son  
stone-blind

Sat by his mother's hearth. He had  
gone too far

Into the King's own woods; and the  
poor mother,

Soon as she learnt I was a friend of  
thine,

Cried out against the cruelty of the  
King.

I said it was the King's courts, not  
the King,

But she would not believe me, and  
she wish'd

The Church were king; she had seen  
the archbishop once,

So mild, so kind. The people love thee,  
father.

*Becket.* Alas! when I was Chan-  
cellor to the King,

I fear I was as cruel as the King.

*Rosamund.* Cruel? O, no—it is the  
law, not he;

The customs of the realm.

*Becket.* The customs! customs!

*Rosamund.* My lord, you have not  
excommunicated him?

O, if you have, absolve him!

*Becket.* Daughter, daughter,  
Deal not with things you know not.

*Rosamund.* I know *him*.  
Then you have done it, and I call you  
cruel.

*John of Salisbury.* No, daughter,  
you mistake our good arch-  
bishop;

For once in France the King had been  
so harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him—  
Thomas,

You could not—old affection master'd  
you,

You falter'd into tears.

*Rosamund.* God bless him for it!

*Becket.* Nay, make me not a  
woman, John of Salisbury.

Nor make me traitor to my holy of-  
fice.

Did not a man's voice ring along the  
aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto  
death.'

How could I excommunicate him  
then?

*Rosamund.* And wilt thou excom-  
municate him now?

*Becket.* Daughter, my time is short,  
I shall not do it.

And were it longer—well—I should  
not do it.

*Rosamund.* Thanks in this life, and  
in the life to come!

*Becket.* Get thee back to thy nun-  
nery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one  
question—

How fares thy pretty boy, the little  
Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

*Rosamund.* No, but saved  
From all that by our solitude.

The plagues

That smite the city spare the soli-  
tudes.

*Becket.* God save him from the  
sickness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy  
nuns,

May that save thee! Doth he remem-  
ber me?

*Rosamund.* I warrant him.

*Becket.* He is marvellously like  
thee.

*Rosamund.* Likier the King.

*Becket.* No, daughter.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but wait  
Till his nose rises; he will be very  
king.

*Becket.* Even so; but think not of  
the King. Farewell.

*Rosamund.* My lord, the city is full  
of armed men.

*Becket.* Even so. Farewell!

*Rosamund.* I will but pass to  
vespers,  
And breathe one prayer for my liege-  
lord the King,

His child and mine own soul, and so  
return.

*Becket.* Pray for me too; much  
need of prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*  
Dan John, how much we lose, we celi-  
bates,

Lacking the love of woman and of  
child!

*John of Salisbury.* More gain than  
loss; for of your wives you  
shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen  
seems

Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it  
—one

So charged with tongue that every  
thread of thought

Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to  
boot,

Whose evil song far on into the night  
Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope  
but death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the  
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever  
swoons

And weeps herself into the place of  
power,

And one an *uxor pauperis* *Ibyci*.

So rare the household honey-making  
bee,

Man's help! but we, we have the  
Blessed Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church  
for bride;

And all the souls we saved and fath-  
er'd here

Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.  
What noise was that? she told us of  
arm'd men

Here in the city. Will you not with-  
draw?

*Becket.* I once was out with Henry  
in the days

When Henry loved me, and we came  
upon

A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so  
still

I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she  
did not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and  
she sat

Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold  
eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother,  
runs thro' all

The world God made—even the beast  
—the bird!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, still a lover  
of the beast and bird?

But these arm'd men—will you not  
hide yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from  
Saltwood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she  
brood

Too long o'er this hard egg, the world,  
and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it  
break

Into young angels. Pray you, hide  
yourself.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-  
hair'd Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house; if Rosa-  
mund is

The world's rose, as her name imports  
her—she

Was the world's lily.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what of  
her?

*Becket.* She died of leprosy

*John of Salisbury* I know not  
why

You call these old things back again,  
my lord.

*Becket.* The drowning man, they  
say, remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he  
dies.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay—but these  
arm'd men—will you drown  
yourself?

He loses half the meed of martyr-  
dom

Who will be martyr when he might  
escape.

*Becket.* What day of the week?  
Tuesday?

*John of Salisbury.* Tuesday, my  
lord.

*Becket.* On a Tuesday was I born,  
and on a Tuesday

Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly  
Forth from Northampton; on a Tues-  
day pass'd

From England into bitter banish-  
ment;

On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me  
The ghostly warning of my martyr-  
dom;

On a Tuesday from mine exile I re-  
turn'd,

And on a Tuesday—

TRACY enters, then FITZURSE, DE BRITO,  
and DE MORVILLE. MONKS following.

—on a Tuesday—Tracy!

(A long silence, broken by Fitzurse  
saying, contemptuously,)

God help thee!

*John of Salisbury (aside).* How the  
good archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of  
scorn.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, we bring a mes-  
sage from the King

Beyond the water; will you have it  
alone,

Or with these listeners near you?

*Becket.* As you will.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, as you will.

*Becket.* Nay, as you will.

*John of Salisbury.* Why, then  
Better perhaps to speak with them  
apart.

Let us withdraw.

[All go out except the four  
Knights and Becket.]

*Fitzurse.* We are all alone with him.

Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

*De Morville.* No, look! the door is open: let him be.

*Fitzurse.* The King condemns your excommunicating—

*Becket.* This is no secret, but a public matter.

In here again!

JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS return.

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

*Fitzurse.* The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,

Commands you to be dutiful and leal  
To your young King on this side of the water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.

What! you would make his coronation void

By cursing those who crown'd him.  
Out upon you!

*Becket.* Reginald, all men know I loved the prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I  
Became his second father. He had his faults,

For which I would have laid mine own life down

To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.

Rather than dim the splendor of his crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it  
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces

So that were done in equity.

*Fitzurse.* You have broken  
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—

Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances

In England, that he calls you over-sea

To answer for it in his Norman courts.

*Becket.* Prate not of bonds, for never, O, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!  
O, ay— the bells rang out even to

deafening,  
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,

Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their raiment down

Before me—would have made my pathway flowers,

Save that it was midwinter in the street,

But full midsummer in those honest hearts.

*Fitzurse.* The King commands you to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

*Becket.* I? Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

*Fitzurse.* But you advised the Pope.

*Becket.* And so I did. They have but to submit.

*The Four Knights.* The King commands you.

We are all King's men.

*Becket.* King's men at least should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

*Fitzurse.* What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

*He* sanction thee to excommunicate  
The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

*Becket.* I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make appeal

# BECKET

To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,  
Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard  
Nay, you yourself were there; you heard yourself.

*Fitzurse.* I was not there.

*Becket.* I saw you there.

*Fitzurse.* I was not.

*Becket.* You were. I never forget anything.

*Fitzurse.* He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

*John of Salisbury (drawing Becket aside).* O my good lord,  
Speak with them privately on this hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

*Becket.* And yet they prate  
Of mine, my brawls, when those that name themselves

Of the King's part have broken down our barns,

Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder me,

They slew my stags in mine own manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,

Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,

The old King's present, carried off the casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half

In Pevensey Castle—

*De Morville.* Why not rather then,

If this be so, complain to your young King,

Not punish of your own authority?

*Becket.* Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.

They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,

I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,  
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.

Give to the King the things that are the King's,

And those of God to God.

*Fitzurse.* Threats! threats! ye hear him.

What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The Knights come round Becket. De Tracy.* He shall not.

*De Brito.* Well, as yet—I should be grateful—

He hath not excommunicated *me*.

*Becket.* Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

*De Brito.* Your Christian's Christian charity!

*Becket.* By Saint Denis—

*De Brito.* Ay, by Saint Denis, now will he flame out,

And lose his head as old Saint Denis did.

*Becket.* Ye think to scare me from my loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No! Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me

Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—

Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth

Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would stand

Clothed with the full authority of Rome,

Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,  
First of the foremost of their files who die

For God, to people heaven in the great day



When God makes up his jewels. Once  
I fled—

Never again, and you—I marvel at  
you—

Ye know what is between us. Ye have  
sworn

Yourselves my men when I was  
Chancellor—

My vassals—and yet threaten your  
archbishop

In his own house.

*Knights.* Nothing can be between  
us

That goes against our fealty to the  
King.

*Fitzurse.* And in his name we charge  
you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

*Becket.* Rest you easy,  
For I am easy to keep. I shall not  
fly.

Here, here, here will you find me.

*De Morville.* Know you not  
You have spoken to the peril of your  
life?

*Becket.* As I shall speak again.

*Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito.*  
To arms!

[*They rush out, De Morville  
lingers.*]

*Becket.* De Morville,  
I had thought so well of you; and  
even now

You seem the least assassin of the  
four.

O, do not damn yourself for company!  
Is it too late for me to save your  
soul?

I pray you for one moment stay and  
speak.

*De Morville.* Becket, it is too late.  
[*Exit.*]

*Becket.* Is it too late?  
Too late on earth may be too soon in  
hell.

*Knights (in the distance).* Close the  
great gate—ho, there—upon  
the town!

*Becket's Retainers.* Shut the hall-  
doors! [A pause.

*Becket.* You hear them, brother  
John;

Why do you stand so silent, brother  
John?

*John of Salisbury.* For I was mus-  
ing on an ancient saw,

*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re;*

Is strength less strong when hand-in-  
hand with grace?

*Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.*  
Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such  
as these?

*Becket.* Methought I answer'd  
moderately enough.

*John of Salisbury.* As one that  
blows the coal to cool the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never  
lean

On any man's advising but your own.

*Becket.* Is it so, Dan John? well,  
what should I have done?

*John of Salisbury.* You should have  
taken counsel with your friends

Before these bandits brake into your  
presence.

They seek—you make—occasion for  
your death.

*Becket.* My counsel is already  
taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

*John of Salisbury.* We are sin-  
ners all,

The best of all not all-prepared to  
die.

*Becket.* God's will be done!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, well. God's  
will be done!

*Grim (re-entering).* My lord, the  
knights are arming in the gar-  
den

Beneath the sycamore.

*Becket.* Good! let them arm.

*Grim.* And one of the De Brocs is  
with them, Robert,

The apostate monk that was with  
Randulf here.

He knows the twists and turnings of  
the place.

*Becket.* No fear!

*Grim.* No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The  
Monks flee.*]

*Becket (rising).* Our dovecote  
flown!

I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

*John of Salisbury.* Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

*Becket.* Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?

Valor and holy life should go together.

Why should all monks be cowards?

*John of Salisbury.* Are they so?

I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

*Becket.* Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

*Grim.* May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bells rings for vespers till end of scene.*]

You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

*Becket.* Ay, monks, not men.

*Grim.* I am a monk my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.

Some would stand by you to the death.

*Becket.* Your pardon.

*John of Salisbury.* He said, 'Attend the office.'

*Becket.* Attend the office?

Why then—the Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John.

[*Grim takes it.*]

*Grim.* I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

*Becket.* The mitre!

*John of Salisbury.* Will you wear it?—there!

[*Becket puts on the mitre.*]

*Becket.* The pall!

I go to meet my King!

[*Puts on the pall.*]

*Grim.* To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*]

*John of Salisbury.* Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

*Becket.* Why do the heathen rage?

My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom

In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

## SCENE III

## NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.*

*Rosamund.* O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—

These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—

Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself He miss the searching flame of pur-

gatory, And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*]

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—

Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him! [*Goes up steps leading to choir.*]

*Becket* (*entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim*).  
No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person;  
Why do you force me thus against my will?

*Grim*. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

*Becket*. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

*John of Salisbury*. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*]

*Monks*. Here is the great archbishop! He lives! he lives!  
Die with him, and be glorified together.

*Becket*. Together?—get you back! go on with the office.

*Monks*. Come, then, with us to vespers.

*Becket*. How can I come  
When you so block the entry? Back, I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,

And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*]

*Monks*. The murderers, hark!  
Let us hide! let us hide!

*Becket*. What do these people fear?

*Monks*. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

*Becket*. Be not such cravens!  
I will go out and meet them.

*Grim and Others*. Shut the doors!  
We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*]

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors! [*Knocking.*]

*Becket*. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have them slain?

Undo the doors; the church is not a castle.

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you?

Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter Monks from cloister.*]

Come in, my friends, come in!

Nay, faster, faster!

*Monks*. O, my lord archbishop,  
A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears Becket along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*]

*Becket*. Shall I too pass to the choir,

And die upon the patriarchal throne  
Of all my predecessors?

*John of Salisbury*. No, to the crypt!

Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,

Lest they should seize thee.

*Grim*. To the crypt? no—no,  
To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath the roof!

*John of Salisbury* (*pointing upward and downward*). That way or this! Save thyself either way.

*Becket*. O, no, not either way, nor any way

Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,

But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,  
Seen by the Church in heaven, the Church on earth—

The power of life in death to make  
her free!

*Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF  
SALISBURY flies to the altar of  
Saint Benedict.*

*Fitzurse.* Here, here, King's men!  
[*Catches hold of the last flying  
Monk.*

Where is the traitor Becket?  
*Monk.* I am not he! I am not he,  
my lord.

I am not he indeed!

*Fitzurse.* Hence to the fiend!  
Where is this treble traitor to the  
King?

*De Tracy.* Where is the archbishop,  
Thomas Becket?

*Becket.* Here.  
No traitor to the King, but Priest of  
God,  
Primate of England.

[*Descending into the transept.*  
I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

*Fitzurse.* Your life.

*De Tracy.* Your life.

*De Morville.* Save that you will ab-  
solve the bishops.

*Becket.* Never,—  
Except they make submission to the  
Church.

You had my answer to that cry be-  
fore.

*De Morville.* Why, then you are a  
dead man; flee!

*Becket.* I will not.  
I am readier to be slain than thou to  
slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half  
a heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with  
my blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's  
full curse

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm  
One of my flock!

*Fitzurse.* Was not the great gate  
shut?

They are thronging in to vespers—  
half the town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him  
and carry him!

Come with us—nay—thou art our  
prisoner—come!

*De Morville.* Ay, make him pris-  
oner, do not harm the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Arch-  
bishop's pall.*

*Becket.* Touch me not!

*De Brito.* How the good priest gods  
himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

*Fitzurse.* I will not only touch, but  
drag thee hence.

*Becket.* Thou art my man, thou  
art my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, al-  
most to falling.*

*De Tracy (lays hold of the pall).*  
Come; as he said, thou art our  
prisoner.

*Becket.* Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*  
*Fitzurse (advances with drawn  
sword).* I told thee that I  
should remember thee!

*Becket.* Profligate pander!

*Fitzurse.* Do you hear that? strike,  
strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's  
mitre, and wounds him in the  
forehead.*

*Becket (covers his eyes with his  
hand).* I do commend my  
cause to God, the Virgin,

Saint Denis of France and Saint  
Alphege of England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canter-  
bury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the  
Archbishop.*

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and ap-  
proaches, hesitatingly, with his  
sword raised.*

*Fitzurse.* Strike him, Tracy!

*Rosamund (rushing down steps  
from the choir).* No, no, no,  
no!

*Fitzurse.* This wanton here. De  
Morville,

Hold her away.

*De Morville.* I hold her.

*Rosamund* (*held back by De Morville, and stretching out her arms*). Mercy, mercy,

As you would hope for mercy!

*Fitzurse*. Strike, I say!

*Grim*. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Strike our archbishop in his own cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you—the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy.

[*Lifts his arm*.

*Fitzurse*. Answer not, but strike.

*De Tracy*. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and glances from it, wounding Becket*.

*Grim*. Mine arm is sever'd.

I can no more—fight out the good fight—die

Conqueror.

[*Staggering into the chapel of Saint Benedict*.

*Becket* (*falling on his knees*). At the right hand of Power—

Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—

Into thy hands, O Lord—into thy hands!— [*Sinks prone*.

*De Brito*. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (*Kills him*.)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

*Fitzurse*. Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

*De Tracy*. No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts*.<sup>1</sup>

*De Morville*. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

*De Brito*. The deed's done—Away!

[*De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse,*

*rush out, crying 'King's men!'*

*De Morville follows slowly.*

*Flashes of lightning thro' the*

*Cathedral*. *Rosamund seen*

*kneeling by the body of*

*Becket*.

<sup>1</sup> A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

# THE FALCON

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.  
FILIPPO, *the Count's foster-brother.*  
THE LADY GIOVANNA.  
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

## THE FALCON

SCENE.—AN ITALIAN COTTAGE, CASTLE  
AND MOUNTAINS SEEN THROUGH  
WINDOW

ELISABETTA discovered seated on stool  
*in window, darning. The Count  
with Falcon on his hand comes  
down through the door at back. A  
withered wreath on the wall.*

*Elisabetta.* So, my lord, the Lady  
Giovanna, who hath been away so  
long, came back last night with her  
son to the castle.

*Count.* Hear that, my bird! Art  
thou not jealous of her?  
My princess of the cloud, my plumed  
purveyor,  
My far-eyed queen of the winds—  
thou that canst soar  
Beyond the morning lark, and, how-  
soe'er  
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop  
down upon him  
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike,  
make his feathers  
Glance in mid heaven.

*[Crosses to chair.*

I would thou hadst a mate!  
Thy breed will die with thee, and  
mine with me;  
I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

*[Sits in chair.*

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be*  
jealous!  
Thou shouldst be jealous of her.  
Tho' bred thee  
The full-train'd marvel of all fal-  
conry,  
And love thee and thou me, yet if  
Giovanna  
Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my  
bird!  
The stately widow has no heart for  
me.

Thou art the last friend left me upon  
earth—

No, no again to that!

*[Rises and turns.*

My good old nurse,  
I had forgotten thou wast sitting  
there.

*Elisabetta.* Ay, and forgotten thy  
foster-brother too.

*Count.* Bird-babble for my falcon!  
Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

*Elisabetta.* Darning, your lordship.  
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers  
now.

Nay, if we *will* buy diamond neck-  
laces

To please our lady, we must darn, my  
lord.

This old thing here (*points to neck-  
lace round her neck*), they are  
but blue beads—my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought  
'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry  
him.

How couldst thou do it, my son? How  
couldst thou do it?

*Count.* She saw it at a dance, upon  
a neck

Less lovely than her own, and long'd  
for it.

*Elisabetta.* She told thee as much?

*Count.* No, no—a friend of hers.

*Elisabetta.* Shame on her that she  
took it at thy hands,

She rich enough to have bought it for  
herself!

*Count.* She would have robb'd me  
then of a great pleasure.

*Elisabetta.* But hath she yet re-  
turn'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* She should return thy  
necklace then.

*Count.* Ay, if  
She knew the giver; but I bound the  
seller

To silence, and I left it privily  
At Florence, in her palace.

*Elisabetta.* And sold thine own  
To buy it for her. She not know? She  
knows

There 's none such other—

*Count.* Madman anywhere.  
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman  
mad

Will hardly help to make him sane  
again.

*Enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* Ah, the women, the  
women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you  
here again! you that have the face of  
an angel and the heart of a—that 's  
too positive! You that have a score of  
lovers and have not a heart for any  
of them—that 's positive-negative:  
you that have *not* the head of a toad,  
and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—  
that 's too negative; you that have a  
cheek like a peach and a heart like the  
stone in it—that 's positive again—  
that 's better!

*Elisabetta.* Sh—sh—Filippo!

*Filippo* (*turns half round*). Here  
has our master been a-glorifying and  
a-velveting and a-silking himself, and  
a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch  
her eye for a dozen year, till he has  
n't an eye left in his own tail to flour-  
ish among the peahens, and all along  
o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o'  
you!

*Elisabetta.* Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't  
you hear that you are saying behind  
his back what you see you are saying  
afore his face?

*Count.* Let him—he never spares  
me to my face!

*Filippo.* No, my lord, I never spare  
your lordship to your lordship's face,  
nor behind your lordship's back, nor  
to right, nor to left, nor to round  
about and back to your lordship's face  
again, for I 'm bonest, your lordship.

*Count.* Come, come, Filippo what  
is there in the larder?

[*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace  
and puts on wood.*]

*Filippo.* Shelves and hooks, shelves  
and hooks, and when I see the shelves  
I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

*Count.* No bread?

*Filippo.* Half a breakfast for a rat!

*Count.* Milk?

*Filippo.* Three laps for a cat!

*Count.* Cheese?

*Filippo.* A supper for twelve mites.

*Count.* Eggs?

*Filippo.* One, but addled.

*Count.* No bird?

*Filippo.* Half a tit and a hern's bill.

*Count.* Let be thy jokes and thy  
jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

*Filippo.* Well, my lord, if all-but-  
nothing be anything, and one plate of  
dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then  
there is anything in your lordship's  
larder at your lordship's service, if  
your lordship care to call for it.

*Count.* Good mother, happy was  
the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I  
But add my poverty to thine. And all  
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray  
thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps  
and shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,  
There sprouts a salad in the garden  
still.

(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss  
thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash  
us down

Our dinner from the skies. Away,  
Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*]

*Elisabetta.* I knew it would come to  
this. She has beggared him. I always  
knew it would come to this! (*Goes up  
to table as if to resume darning, and  
looks out of window.*) Why, as I live,  
there is Monna Giovanna coming  
down the hill from the castle. Stops  
and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay!  
stare at it: it 's all you have left us.  
Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek  
as a miller's mouse! Meal enough,  
meat enough, well fed; but beautiful



—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I 'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtsseys as the LADY GIOVANNA enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Can I speak with the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I 've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it 's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages. [*Raises her hands.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Marriages? I shall never marry again!

*Elisabetta (rises and turns).* Shame on her then!

*Lady Giovanna.* Where is the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Just gone  
To fly his falcon.

*Lady Giovanna.* Call him back and say

I come to breakfast with him.

*Elisabetta.* Holy mother!  
To breakfast! O sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, madam, I will give your message to him. [*Exit.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,  
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—

His one companion here—nay, I have heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of living

And this last costly gift to mine own self,

[*Shows diamond necklace*]  
He hath become so beggar'd that his falcon

Even wins his dinner for him in the field.

That must be talk, not truth, but, truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*]

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou  
Hath set me this hard task, for when

I say,

What can I do—what can I get for thee?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!

Will he not pray me to return his love—

To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire  
stabb'd him there.

The feud between our houses is the  
bar

I cannot cross; I dare not brave my  
brother.

Break with my kin. My brother hates  
him, scorns

The noblest-natured man alive, and  
I—

Who have that reverence for him that  
I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds  
back—

How can I, dare I, ask him for his  
falcon?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*]

Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT  
turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do  
it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are  
pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said!  
[*Advances and bows low.*]

Welcome to this poor cottage, my  
dear lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns  
a cottage to a palace.

Count. 'T is long since we have  
met!

Lady Giovanna. To make amends  
I come this day to break my fast with  
you.

Count. I am much honor'd—yes—  
[*Turns to Filippo.*]

Do what I told thee. Must I do it my-  
self?

Filippo. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor  
fellow! [*Exit.*]

Count. Lady, you bring your light  
into my cottage

Who never deign'd to shine into my  
palace.

My palace wanting you was but a  
cottage;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a  
palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in  
palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still  
the king

Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my  
courtesy;

My liberality perforce is dead  
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come  
To ask a gift.

[*Moves toward him a little.*]

Count. It will be hard, I fear,  
To find one shock upon the field when  
all

The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy—  
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!

Count. Ay, how is he,  
That bright inheritor of your eyes—  
your boy?

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord  
Federigo, he hath fallen  
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

Count. Sick! is it so? why, when  
he came last year

To see me hawking, he was well  
enough;

And then I taught him all our hawk-  
ing-phrases.

Lady Giovanna. O yes, and once  
you let him fly your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was! what  
wonder?—A gallant boy,

A noble bird, each perfect of the  
breed.

Lady Giovanna (*sinks in chair*).  
What do you rate her at?

Count. My bird? a hundred  
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the  
Duke.

I had no heart to part with her for  
money.

Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.  
[*Count turns away and sighs.*]

Wherefore do you sigh?

Count. I have lost a friend of late.

Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with  
you

For fear of losing more than friend, a  
son;

And if he leave me—all the rest of  
life—

That wither'd wreath were of more  
worth to me.

[*Looking at wreath on wall.*]

*Count.* That wither'd wreath is of  
more worth to me  
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of  
this  
New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* And yet I never  
saw  
The land so rich in blossom as this  
year.

*Count* (*holding wreath toward  
her*). Was not the year when  
this was gather'd richer?

*Lady Giovanna.* How long ago was  
that?

*Count.* Alas, ten summers!  
A lady that was beautiful as day  
Sat by me at a rustic festival  
With other beauties on a mountain  
meadow,

And she was the most beautiful of all;  
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.

The mountain flowers grew thickly  
round about.

Y<sup>ou</sup> made a wreath with some of these;  
I ask'd

A ribbon from her hair to bind it  
with;

I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen  
of Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her  
head.

A color, which has color'd all my life,  
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd  
away;

And presently all rose, and so de-  
parted.

Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on  
the grass,

And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding  
wreath despondingly.*]

*Lady Giovanna* (*after pause*). How  
long since do you say?

*Count.* That was the very year be-  
fore you married.

*Lady Giovanna.* When I was mar-  
ried you were at the wars.

*Count.* Had she not thrown my  
chaplet on the grass,  
It may be I had never seen the  
wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had  
taken it.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Ah, but, my lord,  
there ran a rumor then  
That you were kill'd in battle. I can  
tell you

True tears that year were shed for  
you in Florence.

*Count.* It might have been as well  
for me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy  
there

And then imprison'd.

*Lady Giovanna.* Happily, however,  
I see you quite recover'd of your  
wound.

*Count.* No, no, not quite, madonna,  
not yet, not yet.

*Re-enter FILIPPO.*

*Filippo.* My lord, a word with you.  
*Count.* Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses, and  
passes behind chair and takes  
down wreath; then goes to  
chair by table.*]

*Count* (*to Filippo*). What is it,  
Filippo?

*Filippo.* Spoons, your lordship.

*Count.* Spoons!

*Filippo.* Yes, my lord, for was n't  
my lady born with a golden spoon in  
her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't  
never so much as a silver one for the  
golden lips of her ladyship.

*Count.* Have we not half a score of  
silver spoons?

*Filippo.* Half o' one, my lord!

*Count.* How half of one?

*Filippo.* I trod upon him even now,  
my lord, in my hurry, and broke  
him.

*Count.* And the other nine?

*Filippo.* Sold! but shall I not mount  
with your lordship's leave to her lady-  
ship's castle, in your lordship's and  
her ladyship's name, and confer with  
her ladyship's seneschal, and so de-  
scend again with some of her lady-  
ship's own appurtenances?

*Count.* Why—no man. Only see  
your cloth be clean.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode  
In Florence ten years back. What 's here? a scroll  
Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much  
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough

To take it down, if but to guess what flowers

Had made it; and I find a written scroll

That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

*Count.* Ay, if you will.

*Lady Giovanna.* It should be if you can.

(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who could trace a hand  
So wild and staggering?

*Count.* This was penn'd, madonna, Close to the grating on a winter morn  
In the perpetual twilight of a prison, When he that made it, having his right hand  
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

*Lady Giovanna.* O heavens! the very letters seem to shake  
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,  
Tell me the words—or better—for I see

There goes a musical score along with them,

Repeat them to their music.

*Count.* You can touch  
No chord in me that would not answer you  
In music.

*Lady Giovanna.* That is musically said.

[*Count takes guitar. Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*

*Count (sings, playing guitar).*  
'Dead mountain flowers, dead mountain-meadow flowers,  
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,  
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,

Richer than all the wide world-wealth  
of May,  
To me, tho' all your bloom has died  
away,  
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers.'

*Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.*

*Elisabetta.* A word with you, my lord!

*Count (singing).* 'O mountain flowers!'

*Elisabetta (louder).* A word, my lord!

*Count (sings).* 'Dead flowers!'

*Elisabetta (louder).* A word, my lord!

*Count.* I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*

*Count (to Elisabetta).* What is it?

*Elisabetta.* My lord, we have but one piece of earthen-ware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

*Count.* Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east—we never use it

For fear of breakage—but this day has brought

A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

*Elisabetta.* I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord; it is broken!

*Count.* My one thing left of value in the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

*Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).*  
White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

*Count.* And yet, to speak white truth, my good old mother,  
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

*Elisabetta.* How can your lordship say so? There, my lord!

[*Lays cloth.*

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more.

[*Going—returns.*

*Count (touching guitar).* Good! let it be but one.

*Elisabetta.* Hath she return'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* And will she?

*Count (looking at Lady Giovanna).*

I scarce believe it!

*Elisabetta.* Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*

*Count (sings).* 'Dead mountain flowers'—

Ah, well my nurse has broken  
The thread of my dead flowers, as she  
has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as  
dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*

Strange that the words at home with  
me so long

Should fly like bosom friends when  
needed most.

So by your leave, if you would hear  
the rest,

The writing.

*Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him).* There! my lord,  
you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the  
wreath,

Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,  
Fell with her motion as she rose, and  
she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, how-  
ever

Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice  
of her,

Was yet too bashful to return for it!

*Count.* Was it so indeed? was it  
so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

*Lady Giovanna (with dignity).* I

did not say, my lord, that it  
was so;

I said you might imagine it was so.

*Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*

*Filippo.* Here 's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank thee, good Filippo.

[*Exit Filippo.*

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table.*

*Elisabetta (close to table).* Here 's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank you, my good nurse.

*Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes).* And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[*Puts plate on table.*

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table).* Will you not eat with me, my lord?

*Count.* I cannot;

Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you.  
Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.*

*Count.* It is but thin and cold,  
Not like the vintage blowing round  
your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow  
here,

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*]

*Lady Giovanna.* If I might send  
you down a flask or two  
Of that same vintage? There is iron  
in it.

It has been much commended as a  
medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be  
Not quite recover'd of your wound,  
the wine

Might help you. None has ever told  
me yet

The story of your battle and your  
wound.

*Filippo* (*coming forward*). I can  
tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

*Elisabetta.* Filippo! will you take  
the word out of your master's own  
mouth?

*Filippo.* Was it there to take? Put  
it there, my lord.

*Count.* Giovanna, my dear lady, in  
this same battle

We had been beaten—they were ten  
to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd  
down,

I and Filippo here had done our best,  
And, having passed unwounded from  
the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side,  
Our horses grazing by us, when a  
troop,

Laden with booty and with a flag of  
ours

Ta'en in the fight—

*Filippo.* Ay, but we fought for it  
back,

And kill'd—

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* A troop of horse—

*Filippo.* Five hundred!

*Count.* Say fifty!

*Filippo.* And we kill'd 'em by the  
score!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo.* Well, well, well! I bite my  
tongue.

*Count.* We may have left their fifty  
less by five.

However, staying not to count how  
many,

But anger'd at their flaunting of our  
flag,

We mounted, and we dash'd into the  
heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my  
neck;

It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave  
fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Count.* I cannot tell how long we  
strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we  
went

Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under-  
foot. The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may  
strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of  
frost

That help'd to check the flowing of  
the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one  
sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That*  
seem'd to come and go.

They left us there for dead!

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Filippo.* Ay, and I left two fingers  
there for dead. See, my lady! (*Show-  
ing his hand.*)

*Lady Giovanna.* I see, Filippo!

*Filippo.* And I have small hope of  
the gentleman gout in my great toe.

*Lady Giovanna.* And why, Filippo?

[*Smiling absently.*]

*Filippo.* I left him there for dead  
too.

*Elisabetta.* She smiles at him—how  
hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not  
Too proud to look upon the garland,  
you

Would find it stain'd—

*Count* (*rising*). Silence, Elisabetta.

*Elisabetta.* Stain'd with the blood  
of the best heart that ever  
Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

*Lady Giovanna* (*rising slowly*). I  
can eat no more!

*Count.* You have but trifled with  
our homely salad,  
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;  
Not eaten anything.

*Lady Giovanna.* Nay, nay, I can  
not.

You know, my lord, I told you I was  
troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so  
sick,

I bound myself, and by a solemn  
vow,

That I would touch no flesh till he  
were well

Here, or else well in heaven, where all  
is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird  
and salad: Filippo snatches up  
the plate of prunes and holds  
them to Lady Giovanna.*

*Filippo.* But the prunes, my lady,  
from the tree that his lordship—

*Lady Giovanna.* Not now, Filippo.

My lord Federigo,  
Can I not speak with you once more  
alone?

*Count.* You hear, Filippo? My good  
fellow, go.

*Filippo.* But the prunes that your  
lordship—

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* Ay, prune our company of  
thine own, and go!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo.

*Filippo* (*turning*). Well, well! the  
women! [Exit.

*Count.* And thou too leave us, my  
dear nurse, alone.

*Elisabetta* (*folding up cloth and  
going*). And me too! Ay, the dear  
nurse will leave you alone, but, for all  
that, she that has eaten the yolk is  
scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to Lady  
Giovanna, then exit. Lady Gio-  
vanna takes out diamond neck-  
lace from casket.*

*Lady Giovanna.* I have anger'd  
your good nurse; these old-  
world servants  
Are all but flesh and blood with those  
they serve.

My lord, I have a present to return  
to you,  
And afterwards a boon to crave of  
you.

*Count.* No, my most honor'd and  
long-worshipt lady,  
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi  
Takes nothing in return from you ex-  
cept

Return of his affection—can deny  
Nothing to you that you require of  
him.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then I require you  
to take back your diamonds—

[*Offering necklace.*

I doubt not they are yours. No other  
heart

Of such magnificence in courtesy  
Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd  
too rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came  
In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.*

If the phrase  
'Return' displease you, we will say—  
exchange them.

For your—for your—

*Count* (*takes a step toward her and  
then back*). For mine—and  
what of mine?

*Lady Giovanna.* Well, shall we say  
this wreath and your sweet  
rhymes?

*Count.* But have you ever worn my  
diamonds?

*Lady Giovanna.* No!

For that would seem accepting of  
your love.

I cannot brave my brother—but be  
sure

That I shall never marry again, my  
lord!

*Count.* Sure?

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes!

*Count.* Is this your brother's or-  
der?

*Lady Giovanna.* No!

For he would marry me to the richest man

In Florence; but I think you know the saying—

'Better a man without riches, than riches without a man.'

*Count.* A noble saying—and acted on would yield

A nobler breed of men and women.

Lady,

I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold

The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* Lady Giovanna places necklace on table.

And be you

Gracious enough to let me know the boon

By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,

I should be made more happy than I hoped

Ever to be again.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then keep your wreath,

But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift

I ask for, to my mind and at this present

Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

*Count.* It should be love that thus outvalues all.

You speak like love, and yet you love me not.

I have nothing in this world but love for you.

*Lady Giovanna.* Love? it is love, love for my dying boy,

Moves me to ask it of you.

*Count.* What? my time?

Is it my time? Well, I can give my time

To him that is a part of you, your son.

Shall I return to the castle with you?

Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,

Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch

The gittern to some purpose.

*Lady Giovanna.* No, not that!

I thank you heartily for that—and you,

I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,

Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

*Count.* Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once

The wildest of the random youth of Florence

Before I saw you—all my nobleness Of nature, as you deign to call it,

draws

From you, and from my constancy to you.

No more, but speak.

*Lady Giovanna.* I will. You know sick people,

More specially sick children, have strange fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood

May work them grievous harm at times, may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a son!

It might be easier then for you to make

Allowance for a mother—her—who comes

To rob you of your one delight on earth.

How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!

I have put him off as often; but to-day

I dared not—so much weaker, so much worse

For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be well again

If the good Count would give me—'

*Count.* Give me—

*Lady Giovanna.* 'His falcon.'

*Count (starts back).* My falcon!

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes, your falcon, Federigo!



*Count.* Alas, I cannot!

*Lady Giovanna.* Cannot? Even so!  
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy  
world!

How shall I break it to him? how  
shall I tell him?

The boy may die; more blessed were  
the rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking  
alms

For her sick son, if he were like to  
live,

Than all my childless wealth, if mine  
must die.

I was to blame—the love you said  
you bore me—

My lord, we thank you for your en-  
tertainment,

[*With a stately curtsey.*

And so return—Heaven help him!—  
to our son.

[*Turns.*

*Count (rushes forward).* Stay,  
stay, I am most unlucky, most  
unhappy!

You never had look'd in on me be-  
fore,

And when you came and dipt your  
sovereign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to  
eat with me.

I had but emptiness to set before you,  
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an  
egg,

Nothing but my brave bird, my noble  
falcon,

My comrade of the house, and of the  
field.

She had to die for it—she died for  
you.

Perhaps I thought with those of old,  
the nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable  
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you  
scarce

Will thank me for your entertain-  
ment now.

*Lady Giovanna (returning).* I bear  
with him no longer.

*Count.* No, madonna!

And he will have to bear with it as he  
may.

*Lady Giovanna.* I break with him  
for ever!

*Count.* Yes, Giovanna,  
But he will keep his love to you for  
ever!

*Lady Giovanna.* You? you? not  
you! My brother! my hard  
brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!  
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Fe-  
derigo! [*Falls at his feet.*

*Count (impetuously).* Why, then  
the dying of my noble bird  
Hath served me better than her liv-  
ing—then

[*Takes diamonds from table.*  
These diamonds are both yours and  
mine—have won

Their value again—beyond all mar-  
kets—there,

I lay them for the first time round  
your neck.

[*Lays necklace round her neck.*  
And then this chaplet—No more  
feuds but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will make  
Your brother love me. See, I tear  
away

The leaves were darken'd by the bat-  
tle—

[*Pulls leaves off and throws them  
down.*

—crown you

Again with the same crown my Queen  
of Beauty.

[*Places wreath on her head.*  
Rise—I could almost think that the  
dead garland

Will break once more into the living  
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

[*Raises her with both hands.*

We two together  
Will help to heal your son—your son  
and mine—

We shall do it—we shall do it!

[*Embraces her.*  
The purpose of my being is accom-  
plish'd,

And I am happy!

*Lady Giovanna.* And I too, Fe-  
derigo.

# THE CUP

## A TRAGEDY

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

|           |   |                                   |                                            |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| GALATIANS | { | SYNORIX, <i>an ex-Tetrarch.</i>   | PHŒBE.                                     |
|           |   | SINNATUS, <i>a Tetrarch.</i>      | CAMMA, <i>wife of Sinnatus, afterwards</i> |
|           |   | <i>Attendant.</i>                 | <i>Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.</i> |
|           |   | Boy.                              | Maid.                                      |
| ROMANS    | { | ANTONIUS, <i>a Roman General.</i> | <i>Nobleman.</i>                           |
|           |   | PUBLIUS.                          | <i>Messenger.</i>                          |

## THE CUP

### ACT I

#### SCENE I.—DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA

*As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.*

*Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.*

*Synorix.* Pine, beech and plane, oak,  
walnut, apricot,  
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in  
The city where she dwells. She past  
me here  
Three years ago when I was flying  
from  
My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost  
touch'd her—  
A maiden slowly moving on to music  
Among her maidens to this temple—  
O Gods!  
She is my fate—else wherefore has  
my fate  
Brought me again to her own city?—  
married  
Since—married Sinnatus, the tetrarch  
here—  
But if he be conspirator, Rome will  
chain  
Or slay him. I may trust to gain her  
then  
When I shall have my tetrarchy re-  
stored  
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that  
I show'd her  
The weakness and the dissonance of  
our clans,

And how to crush them easily.  
Wretched race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to  
the bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of  
life

Is vengeance for its own sake worth  
the while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now  
this cup—

I never felt such passion for a woman.

*[Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.]*

What have I written to her?

*[Reading the scroll.]*

'To the admired Camma, wife of  
Sinnatus the Tetrarch, one who years  
ago, himself an adorer of our great  
goddess Artemis, beheld you afar off  
worshipping in her temple, and loved  
you for it, sends you this cup rescued  
from the burning of one of her shrines  
in a city thro' which he past with the  
Roman army: it is the cup we use in  
our marriages. Receive it from one  
who cannot at present write himself  
other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN  
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

*[Turns and looks up to Boy.]*

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sin-  
natus?

*Boy.* These grapes are for the house  
of Sinnatus—

Close to the temple.

*Synorix.* Yonder?

*Boy.* Yes.

*Synorix (aside).* That I  
With all my range of women should  
yet shun

To meet her face to face at once! My  
boy,

*[Boy comes down rocks to him.]*

Take thou this letter and this cup to  
Camma,

The wife of Sinnatus.

*Boy.* Going or gone to-day  
To hunt with Sinnatus.

*Synorix.* That matters not.  
Take thou this cup and leave it at her  
doors.

[*Gives the cup and scroll to the  
Boy.*]

*Boy.* I will, my lord.

[*Takes his basket of grapes and  
exit.*]

*Enter ANTONIUS.*

*Antonius (meeting the Boy as he  
goes out).*

Why, whither runs the boy?  
Is that the cup you rescued from the  
fire?

*Synorix.* I send it to the wife of  
Sinnatus,  
One half besotted in religious rites.  
You come here with your soldiers to  
enforce  
The long-withholden tribute; you sus-  
pect

This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,  
Which in your sense is treason. You  
have yet

No proof against him. Now this pious  
cup

Is passport to their house, and open  
arms

To him who gave it; and once there I  
warrant

I worm thro' all their windings.

*Antonius.* If you prosper,  
Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarch-  
ies,

Their quarrels with themselves, their  
spites at Rome,

Is like enough to cancel them, and  
throne

One king above them all, who shall be  
true

To the Roman; and from what I  
heard in Rome,

This tributary crown may fall to you.

*Synorix.* The king, the crown! their  
talk in Rome? is it so?

[*Antonius nods.*]

Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,

And save her from herself, and be to  
Rome

More faithful than a Roman.

[*Turns and sees Camma coming.*]

Stand aside,

Stand aside; here she comes!

[*Watching Camma as she enters  
with her Maid.*]

*Camma (to Maid).* Where is he,  
girl?

*Maid.* You know the waterfall  
That in the summer keeps the moun-  
tain side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock  
And shoots three hundred feet.

*Camma.* The stag is there?

*Maid.* Seen in the thicket at the  
bottom there

But yester-even.

*Camma.* Good then, we will climb  
The mountain opposite and watch the  
chase.

[*They descend the rocks and  
exeunt.*]

*Synorix (watching her).* (*Aside.*)

The bust of Juno, and the  
brows and eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatch-  
able!

*Antonius.* Why do you look at her  
so lingeringly?

*Synorix.* To see if years have  
changed her.

*Antonius (sarcastically).* Love her,  
do you?

*Synorix.* I envied Sinnatus when he  
married her.

*Antonius.* She knows it? Ha!

*Synorix.* She—no, nor even my  
face.

*Antonius.* Nor Sinnatus either?

*Synorix.* No, nor Sinnatus.

*Antonius.* Hot-blooded! I have  
heard them say in Rome,  
That your own people cast you from  
their bounds

For some unprincely violence to a  
woman,

As Rome did Tarquin.

*Synorix.* Well, if this were so  
I here return like Tarquin—for a  
crown.

*Antonius.* And may be foil'd like  
Tarquin, if you follow  
Not the dry light of Rome's straight-  
going policy,  
But the fool-fire of love or lust, which  
well  
May make you lose yourself, may  
even drown you  
In the good regard of Rome.

*Synorix.* Tut—fear me not;  
I ever had my victories among  
women.

I am most true to Rome.

*Antonius (aside).* I hate the man!  
What filthy tools our Senate works  
with! Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you  
well. [*Going.*]

*Synorix.* Farewell!

*Antonius (stopping).* A moment!  
If you track this Sinnatus  
In any treason, I give you here an  
order [*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it.  
(*Signs it.*) There—

'Antonius, leader of the Roman Le-  
gion.'

[*Hands the paper to Synorix.*]

*Goes up pathway and exit.*

*Synorix.* Woman again!—but I am  
wiser now.

No rushing on the game—the net,—  
the net.

[*Shouts of 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!'*  
*Then horn.*]

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough,  
bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the  
husk,

Not one to keep a woman's fealty  
when

Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join  
with him;

I may reap something from him—  
come upon *her*

Again, perhaps, to-day—*her*. Who are  
with him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I  
risk it?

I am a Roman now, they dare not  
touch me.

I will.

*Enter SINNATUS, HUNSMEN and  
hounds.*

Fair sir, a happy day to you!  
You reckon but little of the Roman  
here,

While you can take your pastime in  
the woods.

*Sinnatus.* Ay, ay, why not? What  
would you with me, man?

*Synorix.* I am a lifelong lover of  
the chase,  
And tho' a stranger fain would be al-  
low'd

To join the hunt.

*Sinnatus.* Your name?

*Synorix.* Strato, my name

*Sinnatus.* No Roman name?

*Synorix.* A Greek, my lord; you  
know

That we Galatians are both Greek and  
Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the dis-  
tance.*]

*Sinnatus.* Hillo, the stag! (*To Sy-  
norix.*) What, you are all un-  
furnish'd?

Give him a bow and arrows—follow  
—follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

*Synorix.* Slowly but surely—till I  
see my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond  
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

## SCENE II

A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH'S HOUSE

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Eve-  
ning. Moonlight outside. A couch  
with cushions on it. A small table  
with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of  
grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene  
I. A chair with drapery on it.*

*CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of  
window.*

*Camma.* No Sinnatus yet—and  
there the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,  
Moon on the waste and the wold,  
Moon bring him home, bring him home,  
Safe from the dark and the cold,  
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,  
Home with the flock to the fold—  
Safe from the wolf—

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought  
I heard  
A footstep. No, not yet. They say  
that Rome  
Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear  
lord mixt  
With some conspiracy against the  
wolf.  
This mountain shepherd never  
dream'd of Rome. [*Sings.*]

Safe from the wolf to the fold—

And that great break of precipice that  
runs  
Thro' all the wood, where twenty  
years ago  
Huntsman and hound and deer were  
all neck-broken!  
Nay, here he comes.

*Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.*

*Sinnatus (angrily).* I tell thee, my  
good fellow,  
My arrow struck the stag.

*Synorix.* But was it so?  
Nay, you were further off; besides  
the wind

Went with *my* arrow.

*Sinnatus* I am sure *I* struck him.

*Synorix.* And I am just as sure, my  
lord, *I* struck him.

(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game  
when you are gone.

*Camma.* Come, come, we will not  
quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching  
you.

Yours must have been a wearier. Sit  
and eat,

Anu take a hunter's vengeance on the  
meats.

*Sinnatus.* No, no—we have eaten—  
we are heated. Wine!

*Camma.* Who is our guest?

*Sinnatus.* Strato he calls himself.

[*Camma offers wine to Synorix,  
while Sinnatus helps himself.*]

*Sinnatus.* I pledge you, Strato.

[*Drinks.*]

*Synorix.* And I you, my lord.

[*Drinks.*]

*Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to  
Camma).* What's here?

*Camma.* A strange gift sent to me  
today.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing  
shrine

Of our great Goddess, in some city  
where

Antonius past. I had believed that  
Rome

Made war upon the peoples, not the  
Gods.

*Synorix.* Most like the city rose  
against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred  
shrine

By chance was burnt along with it.

*Sinnatus.* Had you then

No message with the cup?

*Camma.* Why, yes, see here.

[*Gives him the scroll.*]

*Sinnatus (reads).* 'To the admired  
Camma,—beheld you afar off—loved  
you—sends you this cup—the cup we  
use in our marriages—cannot at pre-  
sent write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN  
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no  
boughs to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force?  
No force

Could make me serve by force.

*Synorix.* How then, my lord?

The Roman is encamp't without your  
city—

The force of Rome a thousand-fold  
our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown her-  
self?

And you a prince and tetrarch in this  
province—

*Sinnatus.* Province!

*Synorix.* Well, well, they call it so  
in Rome.  
*Sinnatus* (*angrily.*) Province!  
*Synorix.* A noble anger! but Antonius  
To-morrow will demand your tribute  
—you,  
Can you make war? Have you alliances?  
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?  
We have had our leagues of old with  
Eastern kings.  
There is my hand—if such a league  
there be.  
What will you do?  
*Sinnatus.* Not set myself abroad  
And run my mind out to a random  
guest  
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw  
my hounds  
True to the scent; and we have two-  
legg'd dogs  
Among us who can smell a true occa-  
sion,  
And when to bark and how.  
*Synorix.* My good Lord Sinnatus,  
I once was at the hunting of a lion.  
Roused by the clamor of the chase he  
woke,  
Came to the front of the wood—his  
monarch mane  
Bristled about his quick ears—he  
stood there  
Staring upon the hunter. A score of  
dogs  
Gnaw'd at his ankles; at the last he  
felt  
The trouble of his feet, put forth one  
paw,  
Slew four, and knew it not, and so  
remain'd  
Staring upon the hunter. And this  
Rome  
Will crush you if you wrestle with  
her; then,  
Save for some slight report in her own  
Senate,  
Scarce know what she has done.  
(*Aside.*) Would I could move  
him,  
Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The  
Lady Camma,  
Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,

Will close with me that to submit at  
once  
Is better than a wholly hopeless war,  
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in  
vain,  
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death  
in vain,  
And the small state more cruelly  
trampled on  
Than had she never moved.  
*Camma.* Sir, I had once  
A boy who died a babe; but were he  
living  
And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd  
it, I  
Would set him in the front rank of the  
fight  
With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if  
a state submit  
At once, she may be blotted out at  
once  
And swallow'd in the conqueror's  
chronicle.  
Whereas in wars of freedom and de-  
fence  
The glory and grief of battle won or  
lost  
Solders a race together—yea—tho'  
they fail,  
The names of those who fought and  
fell are like  
A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again  
From century to century, and at last  
May lead them on to victory—I hope  
so—  
Like phantoms of the Gods.  
*Sinnatus.* Well spoken, wife.  
*Synorix* (*bowing*). Madam, so well  
I yield.  
*Sinnatus.* I should not wonder  
If Synorix, who has dwelt three years  
in Rome  
And wrought his worst against his  
native land,  
Returns with this Antonius.  
*Synorix.* What is Synorix?  
*Sinnatus.* Galatian, and not know?  
This Synorix  
Was tetrarch here, and tyrant also—  
did  
Dishonor to our wives.  
*Synorix.* Perhaps you judge him

With feeble charity; being as you tell  
me

Tetrarch, there might be willing wives  
enough

To feel dishonor honor.

*Camma.* Do not say so.  
I know of no such wives in all Ga-  
latia.

There may be courtesans for aught I  
know

Whose life is one dishonor.

*Enter ATTENDANT.*

*Attendant (aside).* My lord, the  
men!

*Sinnatus (aside).* Our anti-Roman  
faction?

*Attendant (aside).* Ay, my lord.

*Synorix (overhearing).* (*Aside.*)  
I have enough—their anti-  
Roman faction.

*Sinnatus (aloud).* Some friends of  
mine would speak with me  
without.

You, Strato, make good cheer till I  
return. [*Exit.*]

*Synorix.* I have much to say, no  
time to say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that  
Galatian

Who sent the cup.

*Camma.* I thank you from my  
heart.

*Synorix.* Then that I serve with  
Rome to serve Galatia.

That is my secret; keep it, or you sell  
me

To torment and to death.

[*Coming closer.*]

For your ear only—  
I love you—for your love to the great  
Goddess.

The Romans sent me here a spy upon  
you,

To draw you and your husband to  
your doom.

I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by  
Antonius.*]

This paper sign'd  
Antonius—will you take it, read it?  
there!

*Camma (reads).* 'You are to seize  
on Sinnatus,—if—'

*Synorix (snatches paper).* No more.  
What follows is for no wife's eyes. O

*Camma,*  
Rome has a glimpse of this conspir-  
acy;

Rome never yet hath spar'd conspira-  
tor.

Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucify-  
ing—

*Camma.* I am tender enough. Why  
do you practise on me?

*Synorix.* Why should I practise on  
you? How you wrong me!

I am sure of being every way ma-  
lign'd.

And if you should betray me to your  
husband—

*Camma.* Will you betray him by  
this order?

*Synorix.* See,  
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd  
Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*]

*Camma.* I owe you thanks for  
ever.

*Synorix.* Hath Sinnatus never told  
you of this plot?

*Camma.* What plot?

*Synorix.* A child's sand-castle on  
the beach

For the next wave,—all seen,—all  
calculated,

All known by Rome. No chance for  
Sinnatus.

*Camma.* Why said you not as much  
to my brave Sinnatus?

*Synorix.* Brave—ay—too brave, too  
over-confident,

Too like to ruin himself, and you, and  
me!

Who else, with this black thunderbolt  
of Rome

Above him, would have chased the  
stag to-day

In the full face of all the Roman  
camp?

A miracle that they let him home  
again,

Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.

[*Camma shudders.*]  
(*Aside.*) I have made her  
tremble.



(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to know it;

I durst not trust him with—my serving Rome

To serve Galatia; you heard him on the letter.

Not say as much? I all but said as much.

I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.

I say it to you—you are wiser—Rome knows all,

But you know not the savagery of Rome.

*Camma.* O!—have you power with Rome? use it for him!

*Synorix.* Alas! I have no such power with Rome. All that

Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought. Comes over to her.*

He will pass to-morrow

In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.

You have beauty,—O, great beauty,—and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,

I am sure you will prevail.

*Camma.* Still—I should tell My husband.

*Synorix.* Will he let you plead for him

To a Roman?

*Camma.* I fear not.

*Synorix.* Then do not tell him.

Or tell him, if you will, when you return,

When you have charm'd our general into mercy,

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of 'Synorix! Synorix!'*

*heard outside.*

Think,—torture,—death,—and come.

*Camma.* I will, I will.

And I will not betray you.

*Synorix (aside, as Sinnatus enters).*

Stand apart.

*Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.*

*Sinnatus.* Thou art that Synorix!

One whom thou hast wrong'd

Without there knew thee with Antonius.

They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

*Synorix.* I am much malign'd. I thought to serve Galatia.

*Sinnatus.* Serve thyself first, villain! They shall not harm

My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door

Opens upon the forest! Out, begone! Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

*Synorix.* However, I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life. [*Exit.*

*Sinnatus (to Attendant).* Return and tell them Synorix is not here. [*Exit Attendant.*

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

*Camma.* Is he—that—Synorix?

*Sinnatus.* Wherefore should you doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

*Camma.* Only one, And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

*Sinnatus.* Come, come, could he deny it? What did he say?

*Camma.* What should he say?

*Sinnatus.* What should he say, my wife!

He should say this, that being tetrarch once

His own true people cast him from their doors

Like a base coin.

*Camma.* Not kindly to them?

*Sinnatus.* Kindly?

O, the most kindly prince in all the world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their wives,

O, ay—their wives—their wives!  
What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife  
if I

Were by to throttle him! He steep'd  
himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should  
*you* guess

What manner of beast it is?

*Camma.* Yet he seem'd kindly,  
And said he loathed the cruelties that  
Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

*Sinnatus.* Did he, *honest* man?

*Camma.* And you, that seldom  
brook the stranger here,

Have let him hunt the stag with you  
to-day.

*Sinnatus.* I warrant you now, he  
said *he* struck the stag.

*Camma.* Why, no, he never touch'd  
upon the stag.

*Sinnatus.* Why, so I said, *my* ar-  
row. Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]

*Camma.* Nay, close not yet the  
door upon a night

That looks half day.

*Sinnatus.* True; and my friends  
may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

*Camma.* He is gone already.

O, look,—yon grove upon the moun-  
tain,—white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier  
snow!

But what a blotch of blackness under-  
neath!

Sinnatus, you remember—yea, you  
must,

That there three years ago—the vast  
vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and  
dropt

Their streamers earthward, with a  
breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out  
The purple zone of hill and heaven.

There

You told your love; and like the sway-  
ing vines—

Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts,  
our prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all  
But cloudless heaven which we have  
found together

In our three married years! You  
kiss'd me there

For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me  
now.

*Sinnatus.* First kiss. (*Kisses her.*)

There, then. You talk almost  
as if it

Might be the last.

*Camma.* Will you not eat a  
little?

*Sinnatus.* No, no, we found a goat-  
herd's hut, and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will  
believe

Now that he never struck the stag—  
a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

*Camma.* I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy  
cup

To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

*Sinnatus.* Good!

*Camma.* If I be not back in half an  
hour,

Come after me.

*Sinnatus.* What! is there danger?

*Camma.* Nay,  
None that I know; 't is but a step  
from here

To the Temple.

*Sinnatus.* All my brain is full of  
sleep.

Wake me before you go, I'll after  
you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

*Camma* (*drawing curtains*). Your  
shadow. Synorix—

His face was not malignant, and he  
said

That men malign'd him. Shall I go?  
Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's  
prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with  
me. [*Exit.*]

## SCENE III

SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN

*Music and Singing in the Temple.**Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him  
PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.**Synorix.* Publius!*Publius.* Here!*Synorix.* Do you remember  
what

I told you?

*Publius.* When you cry, 'Rome,  
Rome,' to seizeOn whomsoever may be talking with  
you,Or man, or woman, as traitors unto  
Rome.*Synorix.* Right. Back again. How  
many of you are there?*Publius.* Some half a score.*[Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.]**Synorix.* I have my guard about  
me.I need not fear the crowd that hunted  
meAcross the woods, last night. I hardly  
gain'dThe camp at midnight. Will she come  
to meNow that she knows me *Synorix*? Not  
if *Sinnatus*Has told her all the truth about me.  
Well,I cannot help the mould that I was  
cast in.I fling all that upon my fate, my star.  
I know that I am genial, I would beHappy, and make all others happy, so  
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will

not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife  
She may, perchance, to save this hus-  
band. Ay!See, see, my white bird stepping to-  
ward the snare.Why, now I count it all but miracle,  
That this brave heart of mine should  
shake me so,

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's

When first he meets his maiden in a  
bower.*Enter CAMMA (with cup)*The lark first takes the sunlight on  
his wing,But you, twin sister of the morning  
star,

Forelead the sun.

*Camma.* Where is Antonius?*Synorix.* Not here as yet. You are  
too early for him.*[She crosses towards Temple.]**Synorix.* Nay, whither go you now?*Camma.* To lodge this cup  
Within the holy shrine of Artemis,

And so return.

*Synorix.* To find Antonius here.*[She goes into the Temple, he  
looks after her.]*The loveliest life that ever drew the  
lightFrom heaven to brood upon her, and  
enrichEarth with her shadow! I trust she  
will return.These Romans dare not violate the  
Temple.No, I must lure my game into the  
camp.A woman I could live and die for.  
What!Die for a woman, what new faith is  
this?I am not mad, not sick, not old enough  
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for

her,

*Camma* the stately, *Camma* the great-  
hearted,So mad, I fear some strange and evil  
chanceComing upon me, for, by the Gods I  
seem

Strange to myself!

*Re-enter CAMMA.**Camma.* Where is Antonius?*Synorix.* Where? As I said before,  
you are still too early.*Camma.* Too early to be here alone  
with thee;

For whether men malign thy name,  
or no,

It bears an evil savor among women.  
Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

*Synorix.* Madam, as you know  
The camp is half a league without the  
city;

If you will walk with me we needs  
must meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find  
him

There in the camp.

*Camma.* No, not one step with  
thee.

Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

*Synorix (advancing towards her).*

Then for your own sake,  
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,  
And for the sake of Sinnatus your  
husband,

I must compel you.

*Camma (drawing her dagger).*

Stay!—too near is death.

*Synorix (disarming her).* Is it not  
easy to disarm a woman?

*Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from be-  
hind by the throat).*

*Synorix (throttled and scarce au-  
dible).*

Rome! Rome!

*Sinnatus.* Adulterous dog!

*Synorix (stabbing him with Cam-  
ma's dagger).* What! will you  
have it?

[*Camma utters a cry and runs to  
Sinnatus.*

*Sinnatus (falls backward).* I have  
it in my heart—to the Temple  
fly—

For my sake—or they seize on thee.  
Remember!

Away—farewell! [*Dies.*

*Camma (runs up the steps into the  
Temple, looking back).* Fare-  
well!

*Synorix (seeing her escape).* The  
women of the Temple drag her  
in.

Publius! Publius! No,  
Antonius would not suffer me to  
break

Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*  
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage  
at me!

Then with one quick short stab—eter-  
nal peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in  
passions?

To warm the cold bonds of our dying  
life

And, lest we freeze in mortal ap-  
athy,

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help  
us, keep us

From seeing all too near that urn,  
those ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they  
serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambi-  
tion

Is like the sea wave, which the more  
you drink

The more you thirst—yea—drink too  
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck—it  
drives you mad.

I will be not such wreck, am not such  
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare  
the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman  
Senate,

For I have always play'd into their  
hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma  
for my bride—

The people love her—if I win her  
love,

They too will cleave to me, as one  
with her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary  
king.

[*Looking down on Sinnatus.*  
Why did I strike him?—having proof  
enough

Against the man, I surely should have  
left

That stroke to Rome. He saved my  
life too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sud-  
den fool.

And that sets her against me—for the  
moment.

Camma—well, well, I never found  
the woman

I could not force or wheedle to my  
will.

She will be glad at last to wear my  
crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous  
too,

And we will chirp among our vines,  
and smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to*  
Sinnatus) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

*Enter PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.*

Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye  
not before?

*Publius.* Why come we now? Whom  
shall we seize upon?

*Synorix (pointing to the body of*  
Sinnatus). The body of that  
dead traitor Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

*Music and Singing in Temple.*

## ACT II

SCENE.—INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE  
OF ARTEMIS

*Small gold gates on platform in front  
of the veil before the colossal statue  
of the Goddess, and in the centre  
of the Temple a tripod altar, on  
which is a lighted lamp. Lamps  
(lighted) suspended between the  
pillars. Tripods, vases, garlands of  
flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at  
back close to Goddess, with two  
cups. Solemn music. Priestesses  
decorating the Temple.*

(*The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as  
they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother,  
hear us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind,  
to the wave, to the glebe, to the  
fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O, help  
us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O,  
yield them all their desire!

*Priestess.* Phœbe, that man from  
Synorix, who has been  
So oft to see the priestess, waits once  
more

Before the Temple.

*Phæbe.* We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses,  
who goes out.*]

Since Camma fled from Synorix to  
our Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and  
power,

Was chosen priestess here, have you  
not mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble  
floor?

To-day they are fixt and bright—they  
look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry  
him?

*Priestess.* To marry him who  
stabb'd her Sinnatus?

You will not easily make me credit  
that.

*Phæbe.* Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front  
of the curtains).*

*Priestess.* You will not marry  
Synorix?

*Camma.* My girl, I am the bride of  
Death, and only

Marry the dead.

*Priestess.* Not Synorix then?

*Camma.* My girl,  
At times this oracle of great Artemis  
Has no more power than other or-  
acles

To speak directly.

*Phæbe.* Will you speak to him,  
The messenger from Synorix who  
waits

Before the Temple?

*Camma.* Why not? Let him  
enter.

[*Comes forward on to step by  
tripod.*]

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

*Messenger (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once  
You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,  
You all but yielded. He entreats you now  
For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—  
As I have many a time declared to you—  
He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd  
About his throat—he begs you to forget it  
As scarce his act—a random stroke. All else  
Was love for you; he prays you to believe him.  
*Camma.* I pray him to believe—that I believe him.  
*Messenger.* Why, that is well. You mean to marry him.  
*Camma.* I mean to marry him—if that be well.  
*Messenger.* This very day the Romans crown him king  
For all his faithful services to Rome. He wills you then this day to marry him,  
And so be throned together in the sight  
Of all the people, that the world may know  
You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds  
Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.  
*Camma.* To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.  
When do they crown him?  
*Messenger.* Even now.  
*Camma.* And where?  
*Messenger.* Here by your temple.  
*Camma.* Come once more to me  
Before the crowning,—I will answer you. [*Exit Messenger.*]  
*Phæbe.* Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,

Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand  
Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?  
*Camma.* Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found  
All good in the true heart of Sinnatus, And quench'd it there for ever. Wise! Life yields to Death, and Wisdom bows to Fate,  
Is wisest doing so. Did not this man Speak well? We cannot fight imperial Rome,  
But he and I are both Galatian-born; And tributary sovereigns, he and I Might teach this Rome—from knowledge of our people—  
Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here  
And lightly there. Might I not live for that,  
And drown all poor self-passion in the sense  
Of public good?  
*Phæbe.* I am sure you will not marry him.  
*Camma.* Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.  
[*Shouts (from the distance)* 'Synorix! Synorix!']  
*Camma.* Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus  
Not so long since—they sicken me. The One  
Who shifts his policy suffers something, must  
Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many  
Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.  
*Phæbe.* Most like it was the Roman soldiers shouted.  
*Camma.* Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star  
Hang'd at midday, their traitor of the dawn  
The clamor'd darling of their afternoon!  
And that same head they would have play'd at ball with  
And kick'd it featureless—they now would crown!  
[*Flourish of trumpets.*]

*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on a cushion.*

*Noble (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you

This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,

That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,

And join your life this day with his, and wear it

Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

*Camma.* Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,

One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,

So strange among them—such an alien there,

So much of husband in it still—that if The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting

Upon one throne, should reach it, it would rise—

HE!—HE, with that red star between the ribs,

And my knife there—and blast the king and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir!

Throne him—and then the marriage—ay, and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia—  
[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal.

[*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

*Noble.* So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

*Music.* Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (discovering the Goddess), then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists PHOEBE to veil CAMMA. At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple. CAMMA and all the Priest-

esses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!' All rise.*]

*Camma.* Fling wide the doors, and let the new-made children Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]

I have not heart to do it. (*To Phoebe.*) Look for me!

[*Crouches. Phoebe looks out.*]

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

*Phoebe.* He climbs the throne. Hot blood, ambition, pride

So bloat and redden his face—O, would it were

His third last apoplexy! O, bestial!

O, how unlike our goodly Sinnatus!

*Camma (on the ground).* You wrong him surely; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

*Phoebe (aside).* How dare she say it? I could hate her for it

But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

*Camma.* Is he crown'd?

*Phoebe.* Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

*A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, who throws them on the altar-flame.*

*Camma.* Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,

Nard, cinnamon, amomum, benzoin. Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,

As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the King.

The King should pace on purple to his bride,

And music there to greet my lord the King. [*Music.*]

(*To Phoebe.*) Dost thou remember when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there—whether from maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved, Or some strange second-sight, the marriage-cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the  
Goddess

So shook within my hand that the red  
wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like  
blood, like blood.

*Phæbe.* I do remember your first-  
marriage fears.

*Camma.* I have no fears at this my  
second marriage.

See here—I stretch my hand out—  
hold it there.

How steady it is!

*Phæbe.* Steady enough to stab him!

*Camma.* O, hush! O, peace! This  
violence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentle-  
ness,

Low words best chime with this so-  
lemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and  
Children bearing garlands and  
golden goblets, and strewing flow-  
ers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold  
laurel-wreath crown and purple  
robes), followed by ANTONIUS,  
PUBLIUS, Noblemen, Guards, and  
the Populace.*

*Camma.* Hail, King!

*Synorix.* Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to  
the top.

I would that happiness were gold,  
that I

Might cast my largess of it to the  
crowd!

I would that every man made feast  
to-day,

Beneath the shadow of our pines and  
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.

The past is like a travell'd land now  
sunk

Below the horizon—like a barren  
shore

That grew salt weeds, but now all  
drown'd in love

And glittering at full tide—the bon-  
teous bays

And havens filling with a blissful sea.  
Nor speak I now too mightily, being  
King

And happy! happiest, lady, in my  
power

To make you happy.

*Camma.* Yes, sir.

*Synorix.* Our Antonius,  
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho'  
Rome may set

A free foot where she will, yet of his  
courtesy

Entreats he may be present at our  
marriage.

*Camma.* Let him come—a legion  
with him, if he will.

(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord  
Antonius, to our Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the  
altar. (*To Antonius.*) You on  
that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priest-  
esses, Children, Populace, and  
Guards kneel—the others re-  
main standing.*]

*Synorix.* O thou that dost inspire  
the germ with life,

The child, a thread within the house  
of birth,

And give him limbs, then air, and send  
him forth

The glory of his father—thou whose  
breath

Is balmy wind to robe our hills with  
grass,

And kindle all our vales with myrtle-  
blossom,

And roll the golden oceans of our  
grain,

And sway the long grape-bunches of  
our vines,

And fill all hearts with fatness and the  
lust

Of plenty—make me happy in my  
marriage!

*Chorus (chanting).* Artemis, Arte-  
mis, hear him, Ionian Artemis!

*Camma.* O thou that slayest the  
babe within the womb

Or in the being born, or after slayest  
him



As boy or man, great Goddess, whose  
storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears  
his root

Beyond his head, and strows our  
fruits, and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and  
makes it

Foam over all the fleeted wealth of  
kings

And peoples, hear!

Whose arrow is the plague—whose  
quick flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower  
to the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down  
with him

That crowns it, hear!

Who caust the safe earth to shud-  
der and gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing  
chasm

Domed cities, hear!

Whose lava-torrents-blast and blacken  
a province

To a cinder, hear!

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm  
and leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear! I call  
thee

To make my marriage prosper to my  
wish!

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Ephesian Artemis!

*Camma.* Artemis, Artemis, hear  
me, Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own  
Temple.

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*

*Synorix (aside).* Thunder! Ay, ay,  
the storm was drawing hither  
Across the hills when I was being  
crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

*Camma.* Art thou—still bent—on  
marrying?

*Synorix.* Surely—yet

These are strange words to speak to  
Artemis.

*Camma.* Words are not always  
what they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.  
*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I  
thank thee.

*Camma (turning to Antonius).* An-  
tonius,

Much graced are we that our Queen  
Rome in you

Deigns to look in upon our barba-  
risms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar be-  
fore the Goddess. Takes a cup  
from off the altar. Holds it  
towards Antonius. Antonius  
goes up to the foot of the steps  
opposite to Synorix.*

You see this cup, my lord.

[*Gives it to him.*

*Antonius.* Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Artemis  
Emboss'd upon it.

*Camma.* It is old, I know not  
How many hundred years. Give it me  
again.

It is the cup belonging our own Tem-  
ple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes  
up the cup of Act I. Showing it  
to Antonius.*

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,  
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess,  
being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me  
her priestess,

In honor of his gift and of our mar-  
riage,

That Synorix should drink from his  
own cup.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I  
thank thee.

*Camma.* For—my lord—

It is our ancient custom in Galatia  
That ere two souls be knit for life and  
death,

They two should drink together from  
one cup,

In symbol of their married unity,  
Making libation to the Goddess.

Bring me

The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of  
wine. Camma pours wine into  
cup.*

(To Synorix.) See here, I fill it. (To Antonius.) Will you drink, my lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a Roman blessing on us.

Antonius (*refusing cup*). Thy pardon, priestess!

Camma. Thou art in the right. This blessing is for Synorix and for me.

See, first I make libation to the Goddess, [*Makes libation.*]

And now I drink.

[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*]

Thy turn, Galatian King. Drink and drink deep—our marriage will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.

[*Synorix goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*]

Synorix. There, Camma! I have almost drain'd the cup—

A few drops left.

Camma. Libation to the Goddess.

[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives Camma the cup.*]

Camma (*placing the cup on the altar*). Why, then the Goddess hears.

[*Comes down and forward to tripod. Antonius follows.*]

Antonius, Where wast thou on that morning when I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life, Beside this temple half a year ago?

Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.

Synorix (*coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps*). I sought him, and I could not find him. Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. Antonius—'Camma!' Who spake?

Antonius. Not I.

Phæbe. Nor any here.

Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake. Antonius,

If you had found him plotting against Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,

But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated

To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,

I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. They are finish'd.

Synorix. How!

Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee

Glow thro' thy veins?

Synorix. The love I bear to thee Glows thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.

But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?

The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.

Let all be done to the fullest in the sight

Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add

Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial, when

Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen o' the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live

And die together.

This pain—what is it?—again?

I had a touch of this last year—in—Rome.

Yes, yes. (To Antonius.) Your arm—a moment—it will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy—

This all too happy day, crown—queen  
at once. [*Staggers.*]

O all ye Gods—Jupiter!—Jupiter!  
[*Falls backward.*]

*Camma.* Dost thou cry out upon  
the Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis  
Has vanquish'd their Diana.

*Synorix (on the ground).* I am poi-  
son'd.

She—close the Temple door. Let her  
not fly.

*Camma (leaning on tripod).* Have  
I not drunk of the same cup  
with thee?

*Synorix.* Ay, by the Gods of Rome  
and all the world,

She too—she too—the bride! the  
Queen! and I—

Monstrous! I that loved her.

*Camma.* I loved him,

*Synorix.* O murderous mad-  
woman! I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have  
heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.

[*Antonius and Publius raise him  
up.*]

My feet are tons of lead,  
They will break in the earth—I am

sinking—hold me—

Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down  
on ground.*]

Too late—thought myself wise—

A woman's dupe! Antonius, tell the  
Senate

I have been most true to Rome—  
would have been true

To her—if—if— [*Falls as if dead.*]

*Camma (coming and leaning over  
him).* So falls the throne of an  
hour.

*Synorix (half rising).* Throne? is it  
thou? the Fates are throned,  
not we—

Not guilty of ourselves—thy doom  
and mine—

Thou—coming my way too—*Camma*  
—good-night. [*Dies.*]

*Camma (upheld by weeping Priest-  
esses).* Thy way? poor worm,

crawl down thine own black  
hole

To the lowest hell. Antonius, is *he*  
there?

I meant thee to have follow'd—better  
thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of  
Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the  
Priestesses.*]

*Antonius.*

Thou art one  
With thine own people, and though a  
Roman I

Forgive thee, *Camma.*

*Camma (raising herself).* 'CAM-  
MA!' why, there again

I am most sure that some one call'd.  
O women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am  
glad

I shall not see it. Did not some old  
Greek

Say death was the chief good? He had  
my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I  
the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd vic-  
tor of my will—

On my last voyage—but the wind has  
fail'd—

Growing dark too—but light enough  
to row.

Row to the Blessed Isles! the Blessed  
Isles!—

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is  
the crown

Offends him—and my hands are too  
sleepy

To lift it off (*Phoebe takes the crown  
off*). Who touched me then? I  
thank you.

[*Rises, with outspread arms.*]

There—league on league of ever-  
shining shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun—I see  
him—

'*Camma, Camma!*' Sinnatus, Sinna-  
tus! [*Dies.*]

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

*'A surface man of theories, true to none.'*

This play was produced at the Globe Theatre in London in November 1882; and though generally condemned by the critics, it had a run of five weeks. This was partially due to an incident of a somewhat sensational character which occurred at one of the earlier representations. At the beginning of the opening scene the Marquis of Queensberry rose from his seat in the stalls, and loudly protested against what he regarded as Tennyson's attack upon freethinkers in the character of Edgar. After some delay the performance was allowed to proceed, but at its close the Marquis rose again, declaring himself a freethinker and denouncing the play as a travesty of the sect. The next day he explained in a morning paper that his indignation had been particularly excited by Edgar's comments on marriage. He added:—

'I am a secularist and a freethinker, and, though I repudiate it a so-called atheist, and, as President of the British Secular Union, I protest against Mr. Tennyson's abominable caricature of an individual whom [*sic*], I presume, he would have us believe represents some body of people which, thanks for the good of humanity, most certainly does not exist among freethinkers.'

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.

MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).

FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).

MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).

HIGGINS

JAMES

DAN SMITH

JACKSON

ALLEN

DORA STEER.

EVA STEER.

SALLY ALLEN

MILLY

} *Farm Laborers.*

} *Farm Servants.*

Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.

## THE PROMISE OF MAY

### ACT I

SCENE.—BEFORE FARMHOUSE

*Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.*

*First Farming Man.* Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

*Second Farming Man.* Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

*First Farming Man.* Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he 'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

*Second Farming Man.* Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

*First Farming Man.* Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she would n't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet-'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

*Second Farming Man.* Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

*First Farming Man.* Naäy, I knows nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks does n't hallus know thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

*Second Farming Man.* Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

*First Farming Man.* Noä, not a bit.  
*Second Farming Man.* Why, coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn.

[*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

DORA (*singing*).

The town lay still in the low sunlight,  
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,

The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,

The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough;

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,

O, joy for the promise of May!

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

DORA (*enters singing*).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,

And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,

And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;

And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,

And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,

O, grief for the promise of May!

I don't know why I sing that song; I don't love it.

*Dobson.* Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora! Wheer did they larn ye that?

*Dora.* In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* An' how did ye leäve the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

*Dora.* Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he 'll never be the same man again.

*Dobson.* An' how d' ye find the owd man 'ere?

*Dora.* As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

*Dobson.* Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man be heighty to-daäy, beänt he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way—here, under the apple-tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossoms it is. [*Pointing to apple-tree.*]

*Dobson.* Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

*Dobson.* Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Do they?

*Dobson.* And your eyes be as blue as—

*Dora.* What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-not?

*Dobson.* Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

*Dobson.* Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

*Dora.* Are they?

*Dobson.* Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye 'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knaws how—ye 'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

*Dora.* Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and haä ne pride in him.

*Dobson.* He 'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Will he? How can I tell?

*Dobson.* He's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Dobson.* Did n't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor together?

*Dora.* What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He 's an artist.

*Dobson.* What 's a hartist? I doänt believe he 's iver a 'cart under his waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Quzen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t' other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

*Dora.* And what did *you* say to that?

*Dobson.* Well, I says, s'pose my pig 's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wud n't be a dinner for naw-body, and I should ha' lost the pig.

*Dora.* And what did he say to that?

*Dobson.* Nowt—what could he saäy? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haätes the very sight on him.

*Dora* (*looking at Dobson*). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

*Dobson.* I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

*Dora.* Ay, but you turn right ugly when you 're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget your-

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self in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

*Enter FARMING MAN from barn.*

*Farming Man.* Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you 'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm. [*Exit.*

*Dora.* I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

*Dobson.* Yeäs, yeäs! I 'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit Dora.*) 'Coomly,' says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she 'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I 'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she—but she said it spiteful-like. To look at—yeäs, 'coomly,' and she may n't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a booök beänt but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

*Enter WILSON.*

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

*Wilson.* Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

*Dobson.* An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t' other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin' upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor—but a beänt.

*Wilson.* He 's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

*Dobson.* Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether—leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be know'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

*Wilson.* Well, it 's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

*Dobson.* Noä, but I haätes 'im.

*Wilson.* Better step out of his road, then, for he 's walking to us, and with a hook in his hand.

*Dobson.* An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they püts foälk off the owd waäys.

*Enter EDGAR, reading—not seeing DOBSON and WILSON.*

*Edgar.* This author, with his charm of simple style

And close dialectic, all but proving man

An automatic series of sensations,  
Has often numb'd me into apathy  
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road

That breaks off short into the abysses  
—made me

A quietist taking all things easily.

*Dobson (aside).* There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it.

*Wilson (aside).* Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson (scornfully).* An' thou doän't understan' it neither—and thou schoolmaster an' all!

*Edgar.* What can a man, then, live for but sensations,

Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo

Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones

Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.

For me, whose cheerless Houris after death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones  
—the while—

If possible, here! to crop the flower  
and pass.

*Dobson.* Well, I never 'eärd the  
likes o' that afore.

*Wilson (aside).* But I have, Mr.  
Dobson. It 's the old Scripture text,  
'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow  
we die.' I 'm sorry for it, for, tho' he  
never comes to church, I thought bet-  
ter of him.

*Edgar.* 'What are we,' says the  
blind old man in Lear?  
'As flies to the gods; they kill us for  
their sport.'

*Dobson (aside).* Then the owd man  
i' Lear should be shaämed of hissen,  
but noän o' the parishes goäs by that  
näame 'ereabouts.

*Edgar.* The gods! but they, the  
shadows of ourselves,  
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,  
And not for *her* sport either. She  
knows nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him!  
for why

Cannot *he* take his pastime like the  
flies?

And if my pleasure breed another's  
pain,

Well—is not that the course of Na-  
ture too,

From the dim dawn of being—her  
main law

Whereby she grows in beauty—that  
her flies

Must massacre each other? this poor  
Nature!

*Dobson.* Natur! Natur! Well, it be  
i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäd  
now; but I weänt.

*Edgar.* A quietist taking all things  
easily—why—

Have I been dipping into this again  
To steel myself against the leaving  
her?

[*Closes book, seeing Wilson.*

Good day!

*Wilson.* Good day, sir.

[*Dobson looks hard at Edgar.*

*Edgar (to Dobson).* Have I the

pleasure, friend, of knowing  
you?

*Dobson.* Dobson.

*Edgar.* Good day, then, Dobson.

[*Exit*

*Dobson.* 'Good daäy then, Dobson!  
Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson  
tha 'eärd 'im thysen—the feller could  
n't find a Mister in his mouth fur me,  
as farms five hoonderd haäcre.

*Wilson.* You never find one for me,  
Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* Noä, fur thou be nobbut  
schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a  
Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

*Wilson.* He can hardly be both, and  
he pays me regular every Saturday.

*Dobson.* Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

*Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN.*

*Steer (goes and sits under apple-  
tree).* Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

*Dobson.* Noä, Mr. Steer.

*Steer.* Well, I reckons they 'll hev'  
a fine cider-crop to-year if the blos-  
som 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors,  
and the saäme to you, my men. I  
taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you  
be doomed—what 's the newspaäper  
word, Wilson?—celebrate—to cele-  
brate my birthdaäy i' this fashion.  
Niver man 'ed better friends, and I  
will saäy niver master 'ed better men;  
fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye  
sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as  
much mine as yours; and, thaw I says  
it mysen, niver men 'ed a better mas-  
ter—and I knaws what men be, and  
what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a  
laäbtorer, and now I be a landlord—  
burn a plowman, and now, as far as  
money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw  
I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw  
time to maäke mysen a scholard while  
I wur maäkin mysen a gentleman, but  
I ha' taäen good care to turn out boäth  
my darters right down fine laädies.

*Dobson.* An' soä they be.

*First Farming Man.* Soä they be!  
soä they be!

*Second Farming Man.* The Lord  
bless boäth on 'em!



*Third Farming Man.* An' the saäme to you, master!

*Fourth Farming Man.* And long life to boäth on 'em. An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise!

*Steer.* Thank ye!

*Enter EVA.*

Wheer 'asta been?

*Eva (timidly).* Many happy returns of the day, father.

*Steer.* They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they 'll be 'appy.

*Dobson.* Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

*Steer.* An' why should n't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why should n't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why should n't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-cäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knows the ten-aäcre—I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I 'd drive the plow straäit as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

*Eva.* Methuselah, father.

*Steer.* Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou 'll put one word fur another as I does.

*Dobson.* But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

*Steer.* Roomatics! Noä, I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breäkers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

*Dobson.* Ay, that there be. Im-

manuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

*Steer.* So I thowt, and I heard the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chamber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what makes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chamber?

*Eva.* Father!

*Steer.* Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneecä gev waäy or I 'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

*Eva.* Got thro' the window again?

*Steer.* Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it would n't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

*Eva.* Fright, father!

*Steer.* Maäke thysen eäsy. I 'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

*Eva (clasping her hands).* No, no, father! Towser 'll tear him all to pieces.

*Steer.* Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin'. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lassies 'ull hev a dance.

*Eva (aside).* Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

*Steer.* Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

*Dobson.* Hallus about the premises!

*Steer.* So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we 'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

*Eva.* Yes, father!

[*Exit.*]

*Steer.* Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the täaters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

*All.* Yeäs, yeäs! Three cheers for Mr. Steer.

*[All exeunt except Dobson into barn.]*

*Enter EDGAR.*

*Dobson (who is going, turns).* Squire!—if so be you be a squire.

*Edgar.* Dobbins, I think.

*Dobson.* Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

*Edgar.* Well?

*Dobson.* And I thinks I'd like to tääke the measure o' your foot.

*Edgar.* Ay, if you 'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

*Dobson.* Coom, coom, that 's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I would n't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt.

*[Exit into barn.]*

*Edgar.* Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I

Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy.

But I must free myself from this entanglement.

I have all my life before me—so has she—

Give her a month or two, and her affections

Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate

Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole

Tradition of our land, and left his heir,

Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,

He, too, would oust me from his will, if I

Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself—

The storm is hard at hand will sweep away

Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,

Following their best affinities, will each

Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear

Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism,

Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,

Would call this vice; but one time's  
 vice may be  
 The virtue of another; and Vice and  
 Virtue  
 Are but two masks of self; and what  
 hereafter  
 Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in  
 the gulf  
 Of never-dawning darkness?

*Enter EVA.*

My sweet Eva,  
 Where have you lain in ambush all the  
 morning?  
 They say your sister, Dora, has re-  
 turn'd,  
 And that should make you happy, if  
 you love her!  
 But you look troubled.  
*Eva.* O, I love her so,  
 I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.  
 We never kept a secret from each  
 other;  
 She would have seen at once into my  
 trouble,  
 And ask'd me what I could not answer.  
 O, Philip,  
 Father heard you last night. Our  
 savage mastiff,  
 That all but kill'd the beggar, will be  
 placed  
 Beneath the window, Philip.

*Edgar.* Savage, is he?  
 What matters? Come, give me your  
 hand and kiss me

This beautiful May-morning.

*Eva.* The most beautiful  
 May we have had for many years!

*Edgar.* And here  
 Is the most beautiful morning of this  
 May.

Nay, you must smile upon me! There  
 —you make

The May and morning still more beau-  
 tiful

You, the most beautiful blossom of the  
 May.

*Eva.* Dear Philip, all the world is  
 beautiful  
 If we were happy, and could chime in  
 with it.

*Edgar.* True; for the senses, love,  
 are for the world;  
 That for the senses.

*Eva.* Yes.

*Edgar.* And when the man,  
 The child of evolution, flings aside  
 His swaddling-bands, the morals of  
 the tribe,  
 He, following his own instincts as his  
 God,

Will enter on the larger golden age,  
 No pleasure then taboo'd; for when  
 the tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd  
 This Old World, from that flood will  
 rise the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal  
 veil,

Ring, trinket of the Church, but  
 naked Nature

In all her loveliness.

*Eva.* What are you saying?

*Edgar.* That, if we did not strain to  
 make ourselves  
 Better and higher than Nature, we  
 might be

As happy as the bees there at their  
 honey

In these sweet blossoms.

*Eva.* Yes; how sweet they smell!

*Edgar.* There! let me break some  
 off for you.

*[Breaking branch off.]*

*Eva.* My thanks.

But, look, how wasteful of the blos-  
 som you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six—you  
 have robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples, O, I forgot to tell  
 you

He wishes you to dine along with us,  
 And speak for him after—you that are  
 so clever!

*Edgar.* I grieve I cannot; but, in-  
 deed—

*Eva.* What is it?

*Edgar.* Well, business. I must leave  
 you, love, to-day.

*Eva.* Leave me, to-day! And when  
 will you return?

*Edgar.* I cannot tell precisely;  
 but—

*Eva.* But what?

*Edgar.* I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.  
*Eva.* After all that has gone between us—friends!  
 What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*]  
*Edgar.* All that has gone between us should surely make us friends.  
*Eva.* But keep us lovers.  
*Edgar.* Child, do you love me now?  
*Eva.* Yes, now and ever.  
*Edgar.* Then you should wish us both to love for ever.  
 But, if you *will* bind love to one for ever,  
 Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,  
 As years go on, he feels them press upon him,  
 Begins to flutter in them, and at last  
 Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;  
 While, had you left him free use of his wings,  
 Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?  
*Eva.* But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;  
 'Till death us part'—those are the only words,  
 The true ones—nay, and those not true enough,  
 For they that love do not believe that death  
 Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try  
 To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman,  
 I but a farmer's daughter—  
*Edgar.* Tut! you talk Old feudalism. When the great Democracy  
 Makes a new world—  
*Eva.* And if you be not jesting, Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,  
 Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.  
*Edgar* (*moved*). Then—(*aside*) Shall I say it?—(*aloud*) fly with me to-day.  
*Eva.* No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,

I shall go mad for utter shame and die.  
*Edgar.* Then, if we needs must be conventional,  
 When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns  
 Before your gaping clowns?  
*Eva.* Not in our church—  
 I think I scarce could hold my head up there.  
 Is there no other way?  
*Edgar.* Yes, if you cared  
 To see an over-opulent superstition,  
 Then they would grant you what they call a license  
 To marry. Do you wish it?  
*Eva.* Do I wish it?  
*Edgar.* In London.  
*Eva.* You will write to me?  
*Edgar.* I will.  
*Eva.* And I will fly to you thro' the night, the storm—  
 Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,  
 As once it did in Egypt. O, you see,  
 I was just out of school, I had no mother—  
 My sister far away—and you, a gentleman,  
 Told me to trust you—yes, in everything—  
*That* was the only *true* love; and I trusted—  
 O, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.  
 How could you—O, how could you?—nay, how could I?  
 But now you will set all right again, and I  
 Shall not be made the laughter of the village,  
 And poor old father not die miserable.

DORA (*singing in the distance*).

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,  
 O, joy for the promise of May!

*Edgar.* Speak not so loudly; that must be your sister.  
 You never told her, then, of what has past  
 Between us.

*Eva.* Never!

*Edgar.* Do not till I bid you.

*Eva.* No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

*Edgar* (*moved*). How gracefully there she stands

Weeping—the little Niobe! What! we prize

The statue or the picture all the more  
When we have made them ours! Is she less lovable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To stay—

Follow my art among these quiet fields,

Live with these honest folk—and play the fool!

No! she that gave herself to me so easily

Will yield herself as easily to another.

*Eva.* Did you speak, Philip?

*Edgar.* Nothing more, farewell.  
[*They embrace.*]

*DORA* (*coming nearer*).

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,

O, grief for the promise of May!

*Edgar* (*still embracing her*). Keep up your heart until we meet again.

*Eva.* If that should break before we meet again?

*Edgar.* Break! nay, but call for Philip when you will,

And he returns.

*Eva.* Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar!

*Edgar* (*moved*). And he would hear you even from the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at your call! [*Exit.*]

*Enter DORA.*

*Dora.* Well, Eva!

*Eva.* O, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! O, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

*Dora.* For ever, you foolish child!

What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You have n't even mentioned him in your last?

*Eva.* He has gone to London.

*Dora.* Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it.

*Eva.* Not now—presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy—I think, quite happy now.

*Dora* (*taking Eva's hand*). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see, they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

*Enter all from barn, laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple-tree. STEER enters, smoking, sits by EVA. Dance.*

## ACT II

*Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.*

SCENE.—A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE

*DOBSON and DORA.*

*Dobson.* So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be dead, Miss Dora, beänt he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson, I 've been attending on his death-bed and his burial.

*Dobson.* It be five year sin' ye went

afoor to him, and it seems to me nob-but t'other day. Hes n't he left ye nowt?

*Dora.* No, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

*Dora.* Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

*Dobson* (*handing Dora basket of roses*). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

*Dora.* I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

*Dobson.* Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

*Dora.* I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[*Takes basket, places some in her dress.*]

*Dobson.* Eva's saäke. Yeäs. Poor gell, poor gell! I can't abeär to think on 'er now, fur I 'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all?

*Dora.* Do you want them back again?

*Dobson.* Noä, noä! Keep em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

*Dora.* Why, Farmer, you should be in the hay-field looking after your men; you could n't have more splendid weather.

*Dobson.* I be a going theer; but I thowt I 'd bring tha them roses fust.

The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we 've led moäst on it.

*Dora.* Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

*Dobson.* I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved fer ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last?

*Dora.* I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

*Dobson.* Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him alus wi' ye.

*Dora.* You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. O, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora,—I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river.—Eva.'

*Dobson.* Be that my fault?

*Dora.* No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

*Dobson.* Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should!

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

*Dora.* No, no; it cannot be.

*Dobson.* And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

*Dora.* Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

*Dobson.* Eh, lass! Thy feyther, edicated his darters to marry gentle-föälk, and see what's coomed on it.

*Dora.* That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good afternoon. *[Exit.]*

*Dobson.* 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she 'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäken' me down, like a 'aädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else—blaäme't if I beänt!

*Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.*

The last on it, eh?

*First Haymaker.* Yeäs.

*Dobson.* Hoč'n wi' 't, then.

*[Exit surlily.]*

*First Haymaker.* Well, it be the last loäd hoäm.

*Second Haymaker.* Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

*Sally Allen.* Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäy-field, when meä and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t' other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

*James.* Why, lass, doänt that know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jalousies.

*Sally.* Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

*First Haymaker.* Well, but, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper—'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

*All.* Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

#### SONG

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,  
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the wood-  
bine sa gaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue—

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
When ye thowt there were nawbody  
watchin' o' you,

And you an' your Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,  
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa  
graäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky  
sa blue—

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to  
you,

What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,

When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,

At the end of the daäy,  
For the last löäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,

Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue?

Why, coom then, owd feller, I 'll tell it to you;

For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,

Till the end of the daäy,  
And the last löäd hoäm.

*All.* Well sung!

*James.* Fanny be the naäme i' the song, but I swopt it fur *she*.

[*Pointing to Sally.*

*Sally.* Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt tha?

*First Haymaker.* Ye shall sing that ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o' supper.

*Sally.* I weänt goä to owd Dobson; he wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field, and he 'll be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd Steer's gotten all his grass down and wants a hand, and I 'll goä to him.

*First Haymaker.* Owd Steer gi'es nubbut cowl tea to 'is men, and owd Dobson gi'es beer.

*Sally.* But I'd like owd Steer's cowl tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye.

[*Going.*

*James.* Gi'e us a buss fust, lass. <sup>211</sup>

*Sally.* I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

*James.* Why, was n't thou and me a-bussin' o' one another t' other side o' the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally

[*Offering to kiss her.*

*Sally.* Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,  
Till the end o' the daäy,  
An' the last löäd hoäm.

*Enter HAROLD.*

*Harold.* Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!'

Her phantom call'd me by the name she loved.

I told her I should hear her from the grave.

Ay! yonder is her casement. I remem-ber

Her bright face beaming starlike down upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the world, and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full feast

That leaves but emptiness.

SONG.

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy

To the end o' the daäy,  
An' the last löäd hoäm.

*Harold.* Poor Eva! O my God, if man be only

A willy-nilly current of sensations—  
Reaction needs must follow revel—  
yet—

Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he *must* have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?

Remorse then is a part of Destiny, Nature a liar, making us feel guilty Of her own faults.

My grandfather—of him They say, that women—

O, this mortal house,  
Which we are born into, is haunted by

The ghosts of the dead passions of dead men;

And these take flesh again with our own flesh,



And bring us to confusion.

He was only  
A poor philosopher who call'd the  
mind

Of children a blank page, a *tabula*  
*rasa*.

There, there, is written in invisible  
inks

'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness,  
Craft,

Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat  
and fire

Of life will bring them out, and black  
enough,

So the child grow to manhood. Bet-  
ter death

With our first wail than life—

SONG (*further off*).

Till the end o' the daäy,  
An' the last loäd hoäm,  
Loäd hoäm.

This bridge again!

(*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood  
With Eva here! The brook among its  
flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadow-sweet, wil-  
low-herb.

I had some smattering of science  
then,

Taught her the learned names, anat-  
omized

The flowers for her—and now I only  
wish

This pool were deep enough, that I  
might plunge

And lose myself for ever.

*Enter* DAN SMITH (*singing*).

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä  
Thruf slush an' squad

When roäds was bad,  
But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-  
Hop,

Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as  
mysen

That beer be as good fur 'erses as  
men.

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd.  
S'iver I mun git along back to the  
farm, fur she tell'd me to taäke the  
cart to Littlechester.

*Enter* DORA.

*Dora*. Half an hour late! why are  
you loitering here? Away with you  
at once. [*Exit* Dan Smith.

(*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)

Some madman, is it,  
Gesticulating there upon the bridge?  
I am half afraid to pass.

*Harold*. Sometimes I wonder,  
When man has surely learnt at last  
that all

His old-world faith, the blossom of  
his youth,

Has faded, falling fruitless—whether  
then

All of us, all at once, may not be  
seized

With some fierce passion, not so much  
for Death

As against Life! all, all, into the  
dark—

No more!—and science now could  
drug and balm us

Back into nescience with as little pain  
As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,  
This poor, flat, hedged-in field—no  
distance—this

Hollow Pandora-box,  
With all the pleasures flown, not even

Hope  
Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,  
What brought me here? To see her

grave? her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me here.

*Dora* (*coming forward*). Allow me,  
sir, to pass you.

*Harold*. Eva!

*Dora*. Eva!

*Harold*. What are you? Where do  
you come from?

*Dora*. From the farm  
Here, close at hand.

*Harold*. Are you—you are—that  
Dora,

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

The sister. I have heard of you. The likeness

Is very striking.

*Dora.* You knew Eva, then?

*Harold.* Yes—I was thinking of her when—O, yes,

Many years back, and never since have met

Her equal for pure innocence of nature,

And loveliness of feature.

*Dora.* No, nor I.

*Harold.* Except, indeed, I have found it once again

In your own self.

*Dora.* You flatter me. Dear Eva Was always thought the prettier.

*Harold.* And her charm Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding

Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

*Dora.* Indeed, you seemed in trouble, sir.

*Harold.* And you

Seem my good angel who may help me from it.

*Dora (aside).* How worn he looks, poor man! who is it, I wonder. How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?

*Harold.* Harold.

*Dora.* I never heard her mention you.

*Harold.* I met her first at a farm in Cumberland—

Her uncle's.

*Dora.* She was there six years ago.

*Harold.* And if she never mention'd me, perhaps

The painful circumstances which I heard—

I will not vex you by repeating them—Only last week at Littlechester, drove me

From out her memory. She has disappear'd,

They told me, from the farm—and darker news.

*Dora.* She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the world—

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we

Should find her in the river; and we dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain, Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken down

By losing her—she was his favorite child—

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear, But for the slender help that I can

give, Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar, If he should ever show his face among

us,

Our men and boys would hoot him, stone him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all of them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

*Harold.* They say, we should forgive our enemies.

*Dora.* Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him;

We know not whether he be dead or living.

*Harold.* What Edgar?

*Dora.* Philip Edgar of Toft Hall In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

*Harold.* Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself!

*Dora.* This Edgar, then, is living?

*Harold.* Living? well—

One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset

Is lately dead.

*Dora.* Dead!—is there more than one?

*Harold.* Nay—now—not one, (*aside*) for I am Philip Harold.

*Dora.* That one, is he then—dead!

*Harold (aside).* My father's death, Let her believe it mine; this, for the

moment,

Will leave me a free field.

*Dora.* Dead! and this world Is brighter for his absence, as that

other

Is darker for his presence.

*Harold.* Is not this

To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

*Dora.* My five-years' anger cannot  
die at once,

Not all at once with death and him. I  
trust

I shall forgive him—by and by—not  
now.

O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you  
Had seen us that wild morning when  
we found

Her bed unslept in, storm and shower  
lashing

Her casement, her poor spaniel wail-  
ing for her,

That desolate letter, blotted with her  
tears,

Which told us we should never see her  
more—

Our old nurse crying as if for her own  
child,

My father stricken with his first  
paralysis,

And then with blindness—had you  
been one of us

And seen all this, then you would  
know it is not

So easy to forgive—even the dead.

*Harold.* But sure am I that of your  
gentleness

You will forgive him. She you mourn  
for seem'd

A miracle of gentleness—would not  
blur

A moth's wing by the touching; would  
not crush

The fly that drew her blood; and, were  
she living,

Would not—if penitent—have denied  
him *her*

Forgiveness. And perhaps the man  
himself,

When hearing of that piteous death,  
has suffer'd

More than we know. But wherefore  
waste your heart

In looking on a chill and changeless  
past?

Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the  
past

Remains the past. But you are young,  
and—pardon me—

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell

What golden hours, with what full  
hands, may be

Waiting you in the distance? Might I  
call

Upon your father—I have seen the  
world—

And cheer his blindness with a travel-  
ler's tales?

*Dora.* Call if you will, and when  
you will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you  
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva

When in her brighter girlhood, I at  
least

Will bid you welcome, and will listen  
to you.

Now I must go.

*Harold.* But give me first your  
hand;

I do not dare, like an old friend, to  
shake it.

I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege  
When you shall know me better.

*Dora (aside).* How beautiful  
His manners are, and how unlike the  
farmer's!

You are staying here?

*Harold.* Yes, at the wayside inn  
Close by that alder-island in your  
brook,

'The Angler's Home.'

*Dora.* Are *you* one?

*Harold.* No, but I  
Take some delight in sketching, and  
the country

Has many charms, altho' the inhabit-  
ants

Seem semi-barbarous.

*Dora.* I am glad it pleases you;  
Yet I, born here, not only love the  
country,

But its inhabitants too; and you, I  
doubt not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you  
cared

To live some time among them.

*Harold.* If I did,  
Then one at least of its inhabitants  
Might have more charm for me than  
all the country.

*Dora.* That one, then, should be  
grateful for your preference.

## THE PROMISE OF MAY

*Harold.* I cannot tell, tho' standing  
in her presence.

(*Aside.*) She colors!

*Dora.* Sir!

*Harold.* Be not afraid of me,  
For these are no conventional flour-  
ishes.

I do most earnestly assure you that  
Your likeness— [*Shouts and cries*  
*without.*]

*Dora.* What was that? my poor  
blind father—

*Enter FARMING MAN.*

*Farming Man.* Miss Dora, Dan  
Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy  
i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en  
the body up inter your chaumber, and  
they be all a-callin' for ye.

*Dora.* The body!—Heavens! I  
come!

*Harold.* But you are trembling.  
Allow me to go with you to the farm.  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson.* What feller wur it as 'a'  
been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi'  
my Dora? (*Looking after him.*)  
Seeäms I ommost knows the back on  
'im—drest like a gentleman, too.  
Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should  
ha' thowt they 'd hed anew o' gentle-  
foälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she  
fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär  
to that; but that be all one, fur I  
haätes 'im afoor I knows what 'e be.  
Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar  
o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soom-  
erset!—Noä—yeäs—thaw the feller's  
gone and maäde such a litter of his  
faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha!  
a-plaäyin' the säame gaäme wi' my  
Dora—I'll Soomerset tha!

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-  
pond, and see she to be a-lookin' at it.  
I'd like to leather 'im black and blue,  
and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like  
to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock!  
(*Clenching his fists.*)

But what 'ud she säay to that? She  
telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im,  
and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and  
I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she 'd  
niver 'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi'  
the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or  
she beänt Dora Steer.

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is  
faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I 'll  
maäke 'er know! I 'll maäke 'er know!

*Enter HAROLD.*

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy  
now, or I shall be the death on 'im.

[*Exit.*]  
*Harold.* How the clown glared at  
me! that Dobbins, is it,  
With whom I used to jar? but can he  
trace me  
Thro' five years' absence, and my  
change of name,  
The tan of Southern summers and the  
beard?

I may as well avoid him.

Lady like!  
Lilylike in her stateliness and sweet-  
ness!  
How came she by it?—a daughter of  
the fields,  
This Dora!  
She gave her hand, unask'd, at the  
farm-gate;  
I almost think she half return'd the  
pressure  
Of mine. What, I that held the orange  
blossom  
Dark as the yew? but may not those,  
who march  
Before their age, turn back at times,  
and make  
Courtesy to custom? and now the  
stronger motive,  
Misnamed free-will—the crowd would  
call it conscience—  
Moves me—to what? I am dreaming;  
for the past  
Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes  
thro' hers—  
A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva  
More than I knew! or is it but the  
past

That brightens in retiring? O, last  
 night  
 Tired, pacing my new lands at Little-  
 chester,  
 I dozed upon the bridge, and the black  
 river  
 Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams  
 they were. She rose  
 From the foul flood and pointed  
 toward the farm,  
 And her cry rang to me across the  
 years,  
 'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Ed-  
 gar!  
 Come, you will set all right again, and  
 father  
 Will not die miserable.' I could make  
 his age  
 A comfort to him—so be more at  
 peace  
 With mine own self. Some of my  
 former friends  
 Would find my logic faulty; let them.  
 Color  
 Flows thro' my life again, and I have  
 lighted  
 On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must  
 Move in the line of least resistance  
 when  
 The stronger motive rules.  
 But she hates Edgar.  
 May not this Dobbins, or some other,  
 spy  
 Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must  
 make her  
 Love Harold first, and then she will  
 forgive  
 Edgar for Harold's sake. She said her-  
 self  
 She would forgive him, by and by, not  
 now—  
 For her own sake *then*, if not for mine  
 —not now—  
 But by and by.

*Enter DOBSON behind.*

*Dobson.* By and by—eh, lad, dosta  
 know this paäper? Ye dropt it upo'  
 the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you  
 be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out,  
 I hev. Eh, lad, dosta know what tha  
 meäns wi' by and by? Fur if ye be

goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved  
 our Eva—then, by and by, if she  
 weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin'  
 to saäve 'er—if she weänt—look to  
 thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na  
 moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a  
 carrion crow—noä—thaw they hanged  
 ma at 'Size fur it.

*Harold.* Dobbins, I think!

*Dobson.* I beänt Dobbins.

*Harold.* Nor am I Edgar, my good  
 fellow.

*Dobson.* Tha lies! What hasta been  
 saäyin' to my Dora?

*Harold.* I have been telling her of  
 the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft  
 Hall, Somerset.

*Dobson.* Tha lies!

*Harold* (*pulling out a newspaper.*)  
 Well, my man, it seems that you can  
 read. Look there—under the deaths.

*Dobson.* 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar,  
 o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom  
 thou to be sa like 'im, then?

*Harold.* Naturally enough; for I am  
 closely related to the dead man's fam-  
 ily.

*Dobson.* An' 'ow coom thou by the  
 letter to 'im?

*Harold.* Naturally again; for, as I  
 used to transact all his business for  
 him, I had to look over his letters.  
 Now then, see these (*takes out let-  
 ters*). Half a score of them, all di-  
 rected to me—Harold.

*Dobson.* 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so  
 they be.

*Harold.* My name is Harold! Good  
 day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Arold! The feller's cleän  
 daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an'  
 muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true,  
 fur it wur i' print as black as owt.  
 Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.'  
 Why, that wur the very twang on 'im.  
 Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar,  
 or Hedgar's business man, thou hes n't  
 naw business 'ere wi' my Dora, as I  
 knows on, an' whether thou calls thy-  
 sen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to  
 she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like  
 a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and  
 I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an'

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all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

### ACT III

SCENE.—A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE.

DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK.

*Dora (ringing a handbell).* Milly!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;  
For all the souls on earth that live  
To be forgiven must forgive.  
Forgive him seventy times and seven;  
For all the blessed souls in heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

But I 'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, did n't ye?

*Dora.* No, Milly; but if the farming men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss. [Exit.]

*Dora (sitting at desk counting money).* Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter Farming Men.*) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, did n't he?

*Men.* Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

*Dora.* Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

*Allen (with his hand to his ear).* Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

*Dora.* I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters.

*Allen.* Letters! Yeäs, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

*Dora.* But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

*Allen.* I'll hev it done o' Monday.

*Dora.* Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

*Allen.* Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d' ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

*Dora (calling out names).* Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

*Higgins.* Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we 'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

*Dora.* Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There 's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it 's all right.

*Men.* All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]

*Dora.* Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[*Dan Smith advances to Dora.*]

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

*Dora.* Did n't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday that you did

not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages?

*Dan Smith.* I be ready to taäke the pledge.

*Dora.* And as ready to break it again Besides, it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheree the big esh-tree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to läame the läady, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

*Dora.* Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, did n't you?

*Sally (advancing).* Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I could n't abide 'im.

*Dora.* Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What 's become of your brother?

*Sally.* 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

*Dora.* And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

*Sally.* At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

*Dora.* You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

*Sally.* An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waäist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet'art, an' soä I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an' I telled feyther on 'im.

*Dora.* What is all this, Allen?

*Allen.* Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

*Higgins.* That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

*Jackson.* An' meä, Miss.

*Allen.* An' we weänt mention naw

naämes, we 'd as lief talk o' the divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally 'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

*Dora.* Who?

*Allen.* Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

*Dora.* Mr. Edgar?

*Allen.* Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im—not me.

*Dora.* He 's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

*Allen.* I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im. Now then?

*Dora.* Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

*Allen.* Then yon mun be his brother, an' we 'll leather 'im.

*Dora.* I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me; yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him'—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering

the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

O happy lark, that warblest high  
Above thy lowly nest,  
O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
Thro' fields that once were blest,  
O tower spiring to the sky,  
O graves in daisies drest,  
O Love and Life, how weary am I,  
And how I long for rest!

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me—father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me—I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings EVA forward.*) Why, you look better.

*Eva.* And I feel so much better that I trust I may be able by and by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has any one found me out, Dora?

*Dora.* O, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

*Eva.* Yes—this Milly.

*Dora.* Poor blind father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with father to-day?

*Eva.* Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

*Dora.* Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

*Eva.* Bruised; but no bones broken.

*Dora.* I have always told father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

*Eva.* If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

*Dora.* Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

*Eva.* You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

*Dora.* No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

*Eva.* Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

*Dora.* No; do you wish it?

*Eva.* See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

*Dora.* But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

*Eva.* That last was my father's fault, poor man. And this lover of



yours—this Mr. Harold—is a gentleman?

*Dora.* That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much—

*Eva.* Poor Dora!

*Dora.* That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

*Eva.* Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

*Dora.* Could I love him else?

*Eva.* And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

*Dora.* Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Was n't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Was n't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtsies.*) 'Will your ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtsies.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtsies.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

*Eva.* I have heard that 'your lordship,' and 'your ladyship,' and 'your grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

*Dora.* But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I could n't make it out. What was it?

*Eva.* From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called

him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

*Dora.* Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

*Eva.* Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

*Dora.* It is only Milly.

*Enter MILLY, with basket of roses.*

Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

*Milly.* Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson told me to say he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

*Dora.* Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

*Dora.* Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

*Dora.* Not to-day. What are you staying for?

*Milly.* Why, Miss, I be afeared I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

*Dora.* And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

*Eva.* Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad that I mounted upon the parapet—

*Dora.* You make me shudder!

*Eva.* To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl. what are you do-

ing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

*Dora.* And what then?

*Eva.* She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I could n't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I had n't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would father say?—I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

*Dora (reads).* 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies.—SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for father's forgiveness?

*Eva.* I would almost die to have it!

*Dora.* And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

*Milly.* He 's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

*Dora.* Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

*Milly.* Yeäs, Miss, I will.

[*Exit Milly.*]

*Dora.* I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

*Eva (clinging to Dora).* O, Dora, Dora!

*Enter STEER led by MILLY.*

*Steer.* Hes the cow cawwed?

*Dora.* No, father.

*Steer.* Be the colt deääd?

*Dora.* No, father.

*Steer.* He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deääd?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Steer.* What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

*Dora (taking Steer's arm).* Well, father, I have a surprise for you.

*Steer.* I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

*Dora.* Eva has come home.

*Steer.* Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

*Dora.* No, father, that was a mistake. She 's here again.

*Steer.* The Steers was all gentle-foälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I could n't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

*Dora.* No, father, she's here.

*Steer.* Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

*Eva (falling at his feet).* O, forgive me! forgive me!

*Steer.* Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys.

[*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

*Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead).* Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

*Eva.* It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must

lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[Dora takes Eva into inner room.

*Enter MILLY.*

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (*returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar*). Quiet! Quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he 'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss.

[Exit. Dora sits pensively and waits.

*Enter HAROLD.*

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek  
That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds  
Might wish its rose a lily, could it look  
But half as lovely. I was speaking with  
Your father, asking his consent—you wish'd me—  
That we should marry. He would answer nothing,  
I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,  
You look so weary and so worn! What is it  
Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart  
Again to see you; but indeed the state  
Of my poor father puts me out of heart.

Is yours yet living?

Harold. No—I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion!—Ah well, well! the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd

To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,  
Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture  
Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

Harold. Sin! What sin?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery-tale  
Still read, then?

Dora. Yes; our carters and our shepherds

Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds!

Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion—

My mother used to say that such a one  
Was without rudder, anchor, compass—might be

Blown every way with every gust and wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good and gentle,

Yet if thro' any want—

Harold. Of this religion?  
Child, read a little history, you will find

The common brotherhood of man has been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions

More than could ever have happen'd thro' the want

Of any or all of them.

Dora. But, O dear friend,  
If thro' the want of any—I mean the true one—

And pardon me for saying it—you should ever

Be tempted into doing what might seem

Not altogether worthy of you, I think  
That I should break my heart, for you have taught me

To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one been stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amorist,  
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,

This Dobson of your idyll?

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

*Dora.* No, sir, no!  
Did you not tell me he was crazed  
with jealousy,  
Had threaten'd even your life, and  
would say anything?  
Did I not promise not to listen to  
him,  
Nor even to see the man?

*Harold.* Good; then what is it  
That makes you talk so dolefully?

*Dora.* I told you—  
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just  
now,  
One that has been much wrong'd,  
whose griefs are mine,  
Was warning me that if a gentleman  
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he  
would be  
Sooner or later shamed of her among  
The ladies, born his equals.

*Harold.* More fool he!  
What, I that have been call'd a So-  
cialist,  
A Communist, a Nihilist—what you  
will!—

*Dora.* What are all these?

*Harold.* Utopian idiotcies.  
They did not last three Junes. Such  
rampant weeds  
Strangle each other, die, and make  
the soil  
For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napo-  
leons  
To root their power in. I have freed  
myself  
From all such dreams, and some will  
say because  
I have inherited my uncle. Let them.  
But—shamed of you, my empress! I  
should prize  
The pearl of beauty, even if I found it  
Dark with the soot of slums.

*Dora.* But I can tell you,  
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be  
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms  
on mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers  
Had land in Saxon times; and your  
own name  
Of Harold sounds so English and so  
old

I am sure you must be proud of it.

*Harold.* Not I!  
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took  
it

For some three thousand acres. I have  
land now

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

*Dora.* And *what* was  
Your name before?

*Harold.* Come, come, my girl,  
enough

Of this strange talk. I love you, and  
you me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some  
still,

Which you would scarce approve of;  
for all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,  
Caprices, humors, moods, but very  
ready

To make allowances, and mighty slow  
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe  
I could forgive—well, almost any-  
thing—

And that more freely than your formal  
priest,

Because I know more fully than *he*  
can

What poor earthworms are all and  
each of us,

Here crawling in this boundless Na-  
ture, *Dora*,

If marriage ever brought a woman  
happiness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

*Dora.* You make me  
Happy already.

*Harold.* And I never said  
As much before to any woman living.

*Dora.* No?

*Harold.* No! by this true kiss, you  
are the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*

*Eva (with a wild cry).* Philip Ed-  
gar!

*Harold.* The phantom cry! *You—*  
did you hear a cry?

*Dora.* She must be crying out 'Ed-  
gar' in her sleep.

*Harold.* Who must be crying out  
'Edgar' in her sleep?

*Dora.* Your pardon for a minute.  
She must be waked.

o THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON

*Harold.* Who must be waked?

*Dora.* I am not deaf; you fright me.

What ails you?

*Harold.* Speak.

*Dora.* You know her, Eva.

*Harold.* Eva!

[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*

She!

*Eva.* Make her happy, then, and I forgive you. [*Falls dead.*

*Dora.* Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.

O, she has fainted! Sister, Eva, sister! He is yours again—he will love you again;

I give him back to you again. Look up! One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*

'There, there—the heart, O God!—the poor young heart

Broken at last—ail still—and nothing left

To live for.

[*Falls on body of her sister.*

*Harold.* Living—dead—She said 'all still.

Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now—

(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was dead—

I have wasted pity on her—not dead now—

No! acting, playing on me, both of them.

They drag the river for her! no, not they!

Playing on me—not dead now—a swoon—a scene—

Yet—how she made her wail as for the dead!

*Enter MILLY.*

*Milly.* Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.

*Harold (roughly).* Well?

*Milly.* The owd man's coom'd ageän to 'issen, an' wants To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.

*Harold.* The what?

*Milly.* The marriage.

*Harold.* The marriage?

*Milly.* Yeäs the marriage.

Granny says marriages are maäde i' 'eaven.

*Harold.* She lies! They are made in hell. Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

*Milly.* O, law—yeäs, Sir. I 'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*

*Harold.* All silent there, Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look.

If dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare myself,

And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all

This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities

That blast our natural passions into pains!

*Enter DOBSON.*

*Dobson.* You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or whativer

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäs

By haäfe a scoor o' naämes—out o' the chaumber!

[*Dragging him past the body.*

*Harold.* Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber!

I 'll mash tha into nowt.

*Harold.* The mere wild-beast!

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber, dang tha!

*Harold.* Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling Dora rises and comes between them.*

*Dora (to Dobson).* Peace, let him be; it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

A hundred times more worth a  
woman's love,  
Than this, this—but I waste no words  
upon him:

His wickedness is like my wretched-  
ness—

Beyond all language.

(To Harold.) You—you see her  
there!

Only fifteen when first you came on  
her,

And then the sweetest flower of all  
the wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,  
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,  
So loved by all the village people here,  
So happy in herself and in her home—

*Dobson (agitated).* Theer, theer!  
ha' done. I can't abear to see  
her. [Exit.

*Dora.* A child, and all as trustful as  
a child!

Five years of shame and suffering  
broke the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the  
father,

Thro' that dishonor which you  
brought upon us,

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even  
his mind.

*Harold (covering his face).*  
Enough!

*Dora.* It seem'd so; only there was  
left

A second daughter, and to her you  
came

Veiling one sin to act another.

*Harold.* No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me!

I wish'd, if you— [Pauses.

*Dora.* If I—

*Harold.* Could love me, could be  
brought to love me

As I loved you—

*Dora.* What then?

*Harold.* I wish'd, I hoped

To make, to make—

*Dora.* What did you hope to make?

*Harold.* 'T were best to make an  
end of my lost life.

O Dora, Dora!

*Dora.* What did you hope to make?

*Harold.* Make, make! I cannot find  
the word—forgive it—

Amends.

*Dora.* For what? to whom?

*Harold.* 'To him, to you!

[Falling at her feet.

*Dora.* To him! to me!

No, not with all your wealth,  
Your land, your life! Out in the fierc-  
est storm

That ever made earth tremble—he,  
nor I—

The shelter of your roof—not for one  
moment—

Nothing from you!

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauper-  
ism,

Push'd from all doors as if we bore the  
plague,

Smitten with fever in the open field,  
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of

Death—

Nothing from you!

But she there—her last word  
Forgave—and I forgive you. If you  
ever

Forgive yourself, you are even lower  
and baser

Than even I can well believe you Go!

[He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.

## CROSSING THE BAR

Although written in 1889, this poem is used to close all editions of the poet's works, according to his own request.

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

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